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ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ

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(650 - 850)

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ΛΗ Φ. ΣΕΡΡΥ – ΧΡΙΣΤΙΝΑΣ ΑΓΓΕΛΙΔΗ

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A HISTORY OF BYZANTINE  
LITERATURE

(650 - 850)

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
LEE F. SHERRY – CHRISTINE ANGELIDI

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## ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΟΝ ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΗΣ ΒΙΒΛΟΥ

Ο Αλέξανδρος Πέτρου Καζdan καθιερώθηκε ως Βυζαντινολόγος χάρη σε πολλές και ρηξικέλευθες εργασίες σχετικές με την κοινωνία και την οικονομία του Βυζαντίου: αγροτικές σχέσεις, πόλεις, αριστοκρατία, πολιτισμική εξέλιξη, κοσμοθεωρία των Βυζαντινών. Ανέλυσε με απίθανη λεπτολογία το έργο του Νικήτα Χωνιάτη. Διηύθυνε και σε σημαντικό βαθμό έγραψε το Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium. Και τα ενδιαφέροντά του στράφηκαν σιγά σιγά προς την ιστορία της λογοτεχνίας. Σε συνεργασία με τον Lee Sherry και στη συνέχεια με την Χριστίνα Αγγελίδη ανέλαβε μια ιστορία της Βυζαντινής Λογοτεχνίας που θα άρχιζε με τον 7ο αιώνα.

Έργο τιτάνειο και, όπως ο αναγνώστης θα δει στις σελίδες που ακολουθούν, έργο διαφορετικό από τα άλλα γνωστά εγχειρήματα αυτού του είδους. Έργο που αποσκοπεί στο να προβάλλει την πραγματική αξία μιας λογοτεχνίας που έχει αδικηθεί για πολλούς λόγους και εξ αιτίας της συνεχούς σύγκρισής της με τα πρότυπα της κλασικής Ελλάδας. Ο Καζdan και οι συνεργάτες του σκοπό έχουν να θεωρήσουν την Βυζαντινή λογοτεχνία σαν απαύγασμα μιας ζωντανής κοινωνίας, με τα δικά της αισθητικά μέτρα, τις δικές της αισθητικές απαιτήσεις, τα δικά της ιδεώδη και μοντέλα. Πά να την αξιολογήσει κανείς, πρέπει πρώτα να την καταλάβει. Να αναγνωρίσει τις αρχές που την διέπουν και τα μέσα που χρησιμοποιεί. Χωρίς προκαταλήψεις.

Δεν πρέπει να λησμονούμε πως, καιρό πριν, οι Βυζαντινές εικόνες ελεεινογούνταν από ορισμένους που τις συνέκριναν με τα κλασικά εικαστικά έργα. Τα πράγματα έκτοτε άλλαξαν για τις εικόνες. Ίσως είναι καιρός για να αναθεωρηθεί η στάση του σημερινού ανθρώπου και προς άλλες εκφάνσεις του Βυζαντίου.

Τον Μάρτιο του 1996 ο Αλέξανδρος Καζdan βρισκόταν στην Αθήνα και πρότεινε να δημοσιεύσει την ιστορία του στις σειρές του Ινστιτούτου Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, στο οποίο εργάζεται η Χριστίνα Αγγελίδη. Η πρόταση έγινε αποδεκτή μετά χαρά. Στις 29 Μαΐου του 1997 της ταχυδρόμησε το πλήρες χειρόγραφο του παρόντος τόμου, όπως το είχε αναθεωρήσει στα πλαίσια της μακράς υπερατλαντικής συζήτησης που είχε μαζί της. Και μετά έφυγε...

Το χειρόγραφο χρειάστηκε πολλή επεξεργασία, γλωσσική και εκδοτική, για να πάρει ο τόμος την παρούσα μορφή του. Διατηρείται όμως το ύφος και αντανακλάται η προσωπικότητα του κύριου συγγραφέα του, ενός μεγάλου σοφού, ενός σπινθηροβόλου πνεύματος, ενός ισχυρού χαρακτήρα— και ενός αγαπητότατου φίλου, που μας λείπει.

Νίκος Οικονομίδης



## FOREWORD

Of all forms of artistic expression, it was literature to which Alexander Kazhdan was singularly alert. He appreciated contemporary works and he enjoyed sharing his often astute remarks in lively discussion. Alexander was familiar with both the theories of the Russian formalists and of contemporary textual analysis. Moreover, being himself profoundly politicized he believed that the author's involvement in real life inevitably shapes the form and content of his narrative. Thus, it was only natural that Alexander placed at the core of his research the "social localization" of Byzantine authors, and that he saw their works as an entity. His method of research involved investigating textual forms and wording as well as the main themes of the narrative, and he tested his hypotheses in numerous publications, some of which one will find in the notes of this book. He applied them on a larger scale in the book entitled *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and the Twelfth Centuries*, published in collaboration with Simon Franklin in 1984. The *History of Byzantine Literature* was conceived on the same lines, Alexander's aim being to examine the corpus of Byzantine literary production from 650 to 1200.

Alexander conceived this project many years back, but not until the summer of 1993 did he consider his ideas sufficiently well formed to advance it further. He was always convinced that large projects of this nature require a team of experts, and so he asked Lee F. Sherry (by that time a fellow researcher at Dumbarton Oaks) to participate in the preparation of the first volume. Three years later the manuscript of the first volume was presented at a number of public discussions, and specific chapters were submitted to various readers. Subsequently, in June 1996 Alexander asked Christine Angelidi of the Institute for Byzantine Research, Athens, to join the project. Further discussion on the chapters, and corrections and emendations to the manuscript, together with cross-checking of the references to the Greek texts, were carried out. Although his main ideas were strongly held, Alexander enthusiastically welcomed a considerable amount of revision to his work. While writing the chapters of the second volume, he continued to make improvements to the manuscript of the first volume till the last hour of his life (May 29, 1997) —a life not without tribulation, though happily blessed by personal and scholarly fulfilment.

The hazard inherent in acknowledgements is the danger that the contribution of some may unwittingly, and temporarily, have been overlooked. We therefore beg forgiveness of those whose names we fail to mention here, but whose help has been of such value for us.

During his visit to Europe in March and April 1996, Alexander presented the project—together with material from the volume—in Vienna and Athens. The European visit gave him an opportunity to discuss various sections of the book with Johannes Koder and other Austrian colleagues at the Institut für Byzantistik und Neogräzistik of the University of Vienna, and with Nikos Oikonomides and other Greek scholars at the University of Athens and the Institute for Byzantine Research, Athens. In June 1996 it was decided that the book be published in Athens.

The first volume was discussed at a round table held in Dumbarton Oaks on March 15, 1997. We would like here to acknowledge Professor Angeliki Laiou and Dumbarton Oaks for their generosity in sponsoring the meeting, and especially those who participated in the round table: Margaret Alexiou, George Dennis, John Duffy, Elizabeth Fisher, Angeliki Laiou, Antony Littlewood, Jakov Ljubarskij, Silvia Ronchey, Denis Sullivan, and Alice-Mary Talbot. Thanks are due also to Allison Sobke for organizing the event.

Margaret Alexiou, George Dennis, John Duffy, Margaret Mullett, Denis Sullivan, Alice-Mary Talbot, and Warren Treadgold contributed with further suggestions. Many other readers have also contributed with various comments and emendations.

Early editing of the English text was carried out by Denis Sullivan and Alice-Mary Talbot. John Davis subsequently undertook a final revision of the English text when the book was more nearly ready for publication.

Christine Angelidi - Lee F. Sherry

ABBREVIATIONS

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , 71 vols., Paris 1863-1940
AB	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
AHG	<i>Analecta Hymnica Graeca</i>
ALEXANDER, <i>History</i>	P. J. ALEXANDER, <i>Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire</i> , London 1978
ALEXANDER, <i>Patr. Nicephorus</i>	P. J. ALEXANDER, <i>The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople</i> , Oxford 1958
AOC	Archives de l'Orient Chrétien
BARDENHEWER, <i>Altkirchliche Literatur</i>	O. BARDENHEWER, <i>Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur</i> , 5 vols., Freiburg im Breisgau 1902-1932
BBA	Berliner Byzantinische Arbeiten
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BECK, <i>Kirche</i>	H.-G. BECK, <i>Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich</i> , Munich 1959
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> , ed. F. HALKIN, Brussels 1971 [SHag 8a]
BHL	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis</i> , 2 vols., Brussels 1898-1901; repr. 1949 [SHag 6]
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
BNJbb	<i>Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher</i>
BollBadGr	<i>Bolletino della Badia Graeca di Grottaferrata</i>
BS	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
BS/EB	<i>Byzantine Studies/Études Byzantines</i>
ByzF	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CFHB	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
CHRIST-PARANIKAS, <i>AnthCarm</i>	W. CHRIST-M. PARANIKAS, <i>Anthologia graeca carminum christianorum</i> , Leipzig 1871, repr. 1963.
CIMed	<i>Classica et Medievalia</i>
CPG	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , ed. M. GEERARD, 5 vols., Turnhout 1974-1983
DA	<i>Deutsches Archiv für Geschichte [alternately Erforschung] des Mittelalters</i>
DHGE	<i>Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastique</i>
DizPatr	A. DI BERNARDINO (ed.), <i>Dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane</i> , Casole Monferrato 1983-
DOBSCHÜTZ, <i>Christusbilder</i>	E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, <i>Christusbilder</i> , Leipzig 1899 [TU 18]
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>

DSp	<i>Dictionnaire de Spiritualité</i>
DUCANGE	C. DU FRESNE, domino DU CANGE, <i>Clossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Graecitatis</i> , Lyons 1688
EEBS	<i>Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon</i>
EEPhSPA	<i>Epistemonike Epeteris tes Philosophikes Scholes tou Panepistimiou Athenon</i>
EETHSA	<i>Epistemonike Epeteris tes Theologikes Scholes tou Panepistimiou Athenon</i>
EHRHARD, <i>Überlieferung I</i>	A. EHRHARD, <i>Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur</i> , Erster Teil. Die Überlieferung, vol. I, Leipzig 1936-1937
EO	<i>Échos d'Orient</i>
FATOUROS, <i>TheodStud. epistulae</i>	G. FATOUROS, <i>Theodori Studitae epistulae</i> , 2 vols., Berlin-New York 1992 [CFHB 31]
FOLLIERI, <i>Initia</i>	E. FOLLIERI, <i>Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae</i> , 5 vols., Vatican 1960-1966 [ST 211-215bis]
Genesios	<i>Iosephi Genesii, Regum libre quattor</i> , ed. A. LESMUELLER-WERNER, I. THURN, Berlin-New York, 1978 [CFHB XIV]
George of Pisidia, <i>Exp. pers.</i>	<i>Giorgio di Pisidia, Poemi. 1. Panegerici epici</i> , ed. A. PERTUSI, Ettal 1960 [Studia patristica et byzantina], 84-162
George of Pisidia, <i>Herakleiad</i>	in A. PERTUSI as above, 240-307
George the Monk	<i>Georgii Monachi Chronicon</i> , ed. C. DE BOOR, Leipzig 1904, repr. 1978
GOTHr	<i>The Greek Orthodox Theological Review</i>
GOUILLARD, <i>La vie religieuse</i>	J. GOUILLARD, <i>La vie religieuse à Byzance</i> , London 1981
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HUkSt	<i>Harvard Ukrainian Studies</i>
HUNGER, <i>Lit.</i>	H. HUNGER, <i>Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner</i> , 2 vols., Munich 1978
IzvInstBŭlgIst	<i>Izvestija na Instituta za Bŭlgarska istorija (Sofia)</i> ; after 1951: <i>Izvestija na Instituta za istorija</i>
JEclHist	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i> (before 1969, <i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft</i> )
JThSt	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JUGIE, <i>Mort et Assomption</i>	M. JUGIE, <i>La mort et l'Assomption de la sainte Vierge</i> , Vatican 1944 [ST 114]
KAZHDAN, <i>Authors and Texts</i>	A. KAZHDAN, <i>Authors and Texts in Byzantium</i> , Aldershot 1993
KOTTER, <i>Schriften</i>	<i>Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos</i> , ed. B. KOTTER, 5 vols., Berlin 1969-1988 [Patristische Texte und Studien ]

KretChron	<i>Kretika Chronika</i>
KRUMBACHER, <i>GBL</i>	K. KRUMBACHER, <i>Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur vom Justinian bis zum Ende des Oströmischen Reiches (527-1453)</i> <sup>2</sup> , Munich 1897
LAMPE	G. W. H. LAMPE, <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> , Oxford 1961-1968
LEMERLE, <i>Humanisme</i>	P. LEMERLE, <i>Le premier humanisme byzantin</i> , Paris 1971 [Bibliothèque byzantine. Études 6]
Leo Diac.	<i>Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historiae libri decem et liber de elitatione bellica Nicephori Augusti</i> , ed. C. B. HASE, Bonn 1828
Leo Gram.	<i>Leonis Grammatici, Chronographia</i> , ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1842
LIPŠIC, <i>Očerki</i>	E. E. LIPŠIC, <i>Očerki istorii vizantijskogo obščestva i kul'tury. VIII-pervaja polovina IX veka</i> , Moscow-Leningrad 1961
Malalas	<i>Ioannis Malalae, Chronographia</i> , ed. L. DINDORF, Bonn 1831
MANGO, <i>Byzantium and its Image</i>	C. MANGO, <i>Byzantium and its Image</i> , London 1984
MANSI	G. D. MANSI, <i>Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> , 53 vols in 58 prts., Paris-Leipzig, 1901-1927
MGH SRL	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica: Scriptores rerum longobardicarum et italicarum saec. VI-IX</i> , Hannover 1878
OrChAn	<i>Orientalia christiana analecta</i>
OChP	<i>Orientalia christiana periodica</i>
OrChr	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
OIKONOMIDÈS, <i>Listes</i>	N. OIKONOMIDÈS, <i>Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles</i> , Paris 1972
OstkSt	<i>Ostkirchliche Studien</i>
PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, <i>Analekta</i>	A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, <i>Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας</i> , 5 vols., St. Petersburg 1891-1898, repr. Brussels 1963
PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Sylloge	A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, <i>Συλλογὴ παλαιστίνης καὶ συριακῆς ἀγιολογίας</i> , PPSb 19/3 (or fasc. 57); I, 1907
Paschal Chronicle	<i>Chronicon Paschale</i> , ed. L. DINDORF, Bonn 1832
Patr Or	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. MIGNE, 161 vols. in 166 pts., Paris 1857-1866
Philostorgios	PHILOSTORGIOS, <i>Kirchengeschichte</i> , ed. J. BIDEZ-F. WINKELMANN, Berlin 1981 [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte]
PHOTIOS, <i>Bibliotheca</i>	<i>Photius, Bibliothèque</i> , ed. R. HENRY, vols. 1-8, Paris 1959-1977
PLRE 1	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , vol. 1, ed. A. H. M. JONES-J. R. MARTINDALE-J. MORRIS, Cambridge 1971

PPSb	Pravoslavnij Palestinskij Sbornik, 1881-1916
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart 1950-
RE	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
REB	Revue des études byzantines
REGr	Revue des études grecques
ROC	Revue de l'Orient chrétien
RSBN	Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici
RSBS	Rivista di studi bizantini e slavi
SBAW	Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-[philologische] und historische Klasse
SBN	Studi bizantini e neoellenici
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SemKond	Seminarium Kondakovianum
ŠEVČENKO, Ideology, pt. V	I. ŠEVČENKO, Hagiography of the Iconoclast Period, in ID., <i>Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World</i> , London 1982 pt. V, 1-42 (first publ. in A. BRYER-J. HERRIN (eds.), <i>Iconoclasm. Papers given at the 9th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies</i> , Birmingham 1977, 113-131)
SHag	<i>Subsidia Hagiographica</i>
Skyl.	<i>Ioannis Skylitzae, Synopsis historiarum</i> , ed. H. THURN, Berlin-New York 1973 [CFHB 5]
ST	<i>Studi e testi</i>
Synaxarium of Constantinople or SynCP	<i>Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris</i> , ed. H. DELEHAYE, Brussels 1902
SZÖVÉRFY, Hymnography	J. SZÖVÉRFY, <i>A Guide to Byzantine Hymnography</i> , 2 vols., Brookline, Mass.-Leiden 1978-1979
Theodoretos, HE	<i>Theodoret, Historia religiosa</i> , ed. P. CANIVET-A. LEROY MOLINGHEN, 2 vols., Paris 1977-1979
Theoph.	<i>Theophanis Chronographia</i> , ed. C. DE BOOR, 2 vols., Leipzig 1883-1885, repr. Hildesheim 1963
Theoph. Cont.	<i>Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia</i> , ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838
Theophylaktos Simocatta	<i>Theophylacti Simocatta, Historia</i> , ed. C. DE BOOR, rev. P. WIRTH, Stuttgart 1972
TIB	<i>Tabula Imperii Byzantini</i> , ed. H. HUNGER, Vienna 1976-
TM	<i>Travaux et mémoires</i>
TU	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen (zur Geschichte) der altchristlichen Literatur</i>
VASIL'EVSKII, Trudy	V. G. VASIL'EVSKII, <i>Trudy</i> , 4 vols., St Petersburg 1908-1930, repr. The Hague 1968
VizVrem	<i>Vizantijskij Vremmenik</i>
ZRVI	<i>Zbornik radova Vizanološkog Instituta</i>

## PREFACE

The title of this book — *A History of Byzantine Literature* — seems simple, even familiar: more than a hundred years ago Karl Krumbacher published a volume bearing the same name, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*. But the simplicity is deceptive and all three components of this title require and deserve explanation. Byzantinists usually define literature as the entire body of texts, including works on law, science, medicine and geography, comprising the written heritage of a culture. This is how Krumbacher's *Geschichte* was structured, and the same principle was adopted in more recent works by H. Hunger and H.-G. Beck which were intended to replace Krumbacher. In none of these works is the distinction between *Literatur* and *Schrifttum* made, and the question of what makes a certain text a piece of literature is not raised. This question, however, has been asked (beyond the field of Byzantine studies) by many theoreticians of literature, who have contrasted, as the French put it, "l'expression poétique" with "l'expression naturelle". The goal of juridical, astronomical or medical texts, restricted in principle to "natural expression," is the plain presentation of the thought in order that the idea be formulated with maximal clarity; literature or, to use the French technical term, *littérarité* (or *poéticité*) begins at the point where the text is not only loaded with the conceptual intention, but is composed of language transfigured by the play of form; or, to put it differently, where the purpose of the author is not only to convey a concept by means of meaningful, formulated sentences, but also to adorn it with non-conceptual "forms," which are not formulated and, indeed, cannot be formulated in words. A figure of speech, such as anaphora, does not express in itself a concept, an idea; it does not add any nuance to the author's intention — but it is the anaphora (among other figures, allusions, rhythms, alliterations, etc.) that turns a "natural expression" into literature.

Let us try to make the distinction between the literary and non-literary text a little clearer. Consider, for instance, two Byzantine *literati* of the eleventh century: one, Symeon Seth, compiled a scientific compendium on the quality of food; the other, Kekaumenos, wrote a work (the first folios of which were lost so that we know it only under a conventional title) called *Tales and Advice*, or the *Strategikon*. The book belongs to the genre of didactic instructions. Among other things, Seth dissuades his reader from eating venison, and he expounds on why venison can be harmful, especially in summer. In the

*Tales* of Kekaumenos we find a similar piece of advice: nobody should eat mushrooms, since many people have been poisoned by them. At first glance the statements are identical, but in fact they are completely different in function. The phrase of Seth is purely informative, conceptual, non-literary; its meaning is exhausted by its direct sense. In Kekaumenos, however, the phrase is part and parcel of a more general notion held by the author: the world is dangerous, man lives under menacing conditions, he must be afraid of slander, the disfavor of the authorities, financial failure, and natural catastrophe; the poisoned mushrooms constitute just one element in a series of disasters and traps waiting for man. Nowhere does Kekaumenos formulate *expressis verbis* his principle, which may be summed up briefly as "Beware of everything," but by amassing scores of individual cases he inevitably leads the reader to his latent conclusion. It is with elements such as these, unexpressed in direct statements, that Literature begins.

We conceive of literature therefore not as the accumulated mass of written texts but as the system of ways and means employed by the authors to express themselves. We believe that literature is first and foremost the authors' "deportment," their managing of images and figures. Where there are no images and figures, there is no literature. Accordingly, this book will not deal with non-literary texts, with *Schrifttum*. The primary object of this book is not *what* was written, but *how* it was written; not the volume of texts available, but the *littérarité* or the art of expression. Since scholars place emphasis on categorizing the Byzantine legacy, they naturally neglect (or almost neglect) Byzantine esthetics, the pleasure to be found in reading Greek medieval literary texts. This fault of neglect has, however, been transformed into a scholarly virtue, and culpability for the neglect has been transferred to the Byzantines: their literature has been considered void of any pleasure in reading. Since their literary output was measured by the yardstick of ancient literary esthetics (Byzantine authors, it should be noted, despite their notorious *mimesis* of ancient models cherished different esthetic approaches), the proof of their degeneracy was close to hand. The Byzantines' output was obviously a corrupted form of ancient literature, a poor imitation of great paragons, a distorted mirror, incapacitated by the pursuit of classical style (grammar and vocabulary). We believe that the time has come to question this inveterate misevaluation and to make an attempt to appreciate Byzantine literature not in comparison with ancient standards but on its own terms.

The second point is Byzantium itself, consisting as it does of three different but interconnected elements: chronological framework, territory and language. We all know that Byzantium ceased to exist in 1453, when the Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople; some remnants of the empire endured here and there, but the Byzantine *basileia* was destroyed for good. More subjective is the choice of the date when Byzantium begins. There was no such thing as the proclamation of a new Byzantine state to replace the ancient Roman empire; even the transfer of the capital to Constantinople was not as instantaneous as our historical tradition, infatuated with Constantine the Great, asserts. Various dates have been suggested for the beginning of the history of Byzantium, from

around 300 to the mid-seventh century; both Krumbacher and his successors started with the mid-sixth century, immediately following the reign of Justinian I. This is not the place to argue any of these dates; we mention the disagreement simply in order to demonstrate that we realize how subjective our choice (and any choice) must be. Here, we shall begin with the mid-seventh century, and we shall try to show later that this date is at least plausible, if not ideal. This volume will encompass the two first periods of Byzantine history (ca. 650-ca. 850) which form what are conventionally called the Dark Century and the Monastic Revival.

The final element of Byzantine literature which we shall examine is its language. Both Krumbacher and his successors have identified Byzantine literature as a literature produced in the Greek language, within set chronological limits (sometimes extended into the sixteenth century), regardless of territorial allegiance. Again, the problem is not that simple: are we entitled to include as Byzantine literature works produced in Syria under the Caliphate, or in South Italy after it was conquered by the Normans? There is no easy answer to this question: can we imagine, for instance, Byzantine literature without John Damaskenos? Moreover, we have to take into account the fact that we do not know where some works were produced, for example, in Syria or, say, in a Syrian colony in Constantinople. We fear that it is not possible to suggest a general solution to the problem, but we recognize the problem and shall attempt to solve it individually on a case by case basis, that is once again subjective. Another complication are the non-Greek languages spoken in the empire. The surveys of patristic literature, such as those by O. Bardenhewer or J. Quasten, encompass Latin and Oriental fathers side by side with Greek works, and the reason is obvious: Latin, Greek and Oriental patrology were all interconnected and dealt with the same problems. An absolute separation of the theologians on the basis of their language would be illogical. For literature the solution is more complicated: theology deals with concepts, literature with the ways to express concepts, and the latter is far more dependent on language. But fortunately, for the purposes of our book, the empire lost by the mid-seventh century (or some decades later) almost all lands where Latin, Syriac or Coptic served as a literary medium; if some works in Armenian or Hebrew were produced on Byzantine soil during the next centuries, they were an *œuvre* of isolated communities and can be disregarded in this book. But a similar problem arises from the Greek diglossy: should we neglect Byzantine vernacular literature completely, should we sever it from texts in the "pure" language, should we separate literature into high and low styles, or were they parts of the same literature, so that the emergence of vernacular (low-style) texts may be considered a legitimate phenomenon of Byzantine literary development? In the Hunger-and-Beck compendium the "pure" and vernacular literatures are neatly separated, confined to different volumes. Preferring not to follow this tradition we will show that penetration of the vernacular into literature was inextricably linked to the development of Byzantine literature.

The third point probably gives rise to most difficulty. Krumbacher's book, although dubbed *Geschichte*, is not a history—it is a survey or catalogue of the texts written in the

Greek language from the second half of the sixth century to the mid-fifteenth century. It is very indicative that Hunger jettisoned the word *Geschichte*, and Beck retained it only for a specific part of Byzantine literature — *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur*; the latter's other volume has no "historical" element in its title, which speaks of the *theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*. Let us consider why the term "history" is problematic.

There are two contrasting philosophical approaches to the phenomenon of literature: on the one hand, literature can be construed as a superstructure reflecting the economic, social, and political "basis" that underlies it; on the other hand, literature can be treated as an independent sphere of activity, founded on its own laws and principles, pursuing its own course in accordance with its own mechanisms of development; and the main mechanism of development is borrowing or, to put it more elegantly, *mimesis* (imitation). There is probably a middle way of construing literature: not as a chaotic mass of texts that require cataloguing according to preconceived categories (analogous to biological species), nor as a purely social phenomenon reflecting, for example, an economic basis, but rather as an element of culture, independent from and at the same time interconnected with the particular milieu in which it existed. This means that literature is not a mirror of society but a construct bearing to some extent the features of the society that created it. We may easily appreciate that a recreation of Homeric epic is out of the question in our post-industrial society, but in many cases it is very difficult to grasp the concrete forms of this dialectical duality — independence and interconnection, *mimesis* of the past (archaizing, to use the term suggested by M. Bartusis) and contemporaneity.

Despite this difficulty we have to make a choice. If we are concerned predominantly with imitation, the history of literature becomes a delineation of genres which seem to preserve their main features throughout time; literature falls into closed groups whose internal connections and links do not extend beyond to works of other genres produced in the same epoch. This is how Hunger's book is constructed: field after field, genre after genre. This is not the place to try and refute such an approach. Suffice it to say that the genres themselves are subject to historicity — they live and they die out. Obviously there exists what D. Lihačev called "the etiquette of a genre," the set of features typical of the works produced by the rules of a genre. On the other hand, however, the better we know our material the more clearly specific features of an individual writer or of an individual period emerge. There is a genre of historical literature, but historical works of the eleventh and twelfth centuries are a far cry from those produced in the ninth century, and such *literati* as Michael Psellos or Eustathios of Thessalonike, who worked in various genres, preserve specific traits that cross the bounds of genre. At any rate, we will attempt to build this book differently from Krumbacher and his successors — keeping in mind the particularity of a historical period and of a person within the period. According to this view, the history of Byzantine literature needs to be seen not as a development (much less a stability) of genres but a development of *littérarité*, of the modes and ways of poetical expression.

We face more problems. Both Krumbacher and his successors gave us a precious gift: an exhaustive list, a catalogue of Greek medieval texts. Since we are studying not the volume of Byzantine literature but mechanisms of expression, full categorization cannot be our end; not merely because it would require more pages than anybody would care to read (let alone write), but because it was the "leading" authors who elaborated or supported these mechanisms, and it is through them that the functioning of these mechanisms can best be illustrated. Thus we reveal one more subjective element in our very subjective book.

Yet another difficulty presents itself: many Byzantine texts have survived, but we know very little about the men and women who produced them. The authorship and chronology of many works, not only those of second-rate value, are still debated. When and by whom were *Barlaam and Joasaph* or the *Christus Patiens* written? We do not know. Was Theophanes the author of the *Chronicle* of Theophanes? This question has not yet received a definitive answer. And even when we know something about an author, it is almost impossible to link a work with a particular moment of his life. We will broach these difficulties. We realize that the method of cataloguing is scientific and avoids such difficulties, while our "historical" method does not. Nevertheless, we have chosen to go about it in this way — to try to see how the *literati* performed under specific historical conditions. This book will not be a catalogue of works divided into genres, but a history of people who imitated their ancestors yet at the same time thought about their own problems. It will be a history of the best of these writers, of the select few.

Accordingly, the book will consist of a series of short monographs characterizing the leading authors or the most important anonymous works, set forth in more or less chronological order (to the extent that our limited knowledge allows us to establish their sequence). While the focus of the book will be stylistic analysis the problems of identification, attribution and biographical data must at least be touched upon. And while being concerned primarily with presenting a subjective point of view we shall nevertheless endeavour to indicate the opinions of those scholars who disagree with us or with whom we disagree. The reader will thus be in a position to make up his own mind. At the end of each part of the book a concluding chapter will summarize the general features of the development of Byzantine literature within specific chronological limits.

## INTRODUCTION

It would be trivial to say that the seventh century was a crucial period in the development of the Late Roman or Byzantine empire; it is hard to find a century in the thousand-year-long history of the Empire of Constantinople to which such a cliché has not been applied. But despite its triviality such a statement nonetheless contains a large element of truth: the seventh century was crucial in the process of the transformation of the ancient universal empire into a medieval Mediterranean state. D. Zakythinos, E. Stein and G. Ostrogorskij highlighted its significance, and recently J. Haldon strongly supported this view, whereas J. Karayannopoulos has been its most eager opponent, considering the reign of Justinian I (527-65) as the actual turning-point.<sup>1</sup> Historical periods do not die instantaneously, their boundaries are usually fluid, and the change brought in by the seventh century unquestionably was preceded by changes under Justinian. There is no precise method for measuring the percentage of change that took place in the sixth and seventh centuries; as so often happens, we are confronted by the possibility of alternative solutions. Yet the seventh century has to be seen as a time of crisis and cardinal change. However, we should raise one note of caution before plunging into the sea of facts: unlike Ostrogorskij, we do not intend to see in the “reforms” by Herakleios and his successors a catalyst that changed the empire. We think that the process was slow, spontaneous, starting from below—but the results were evident and dramatic. If we consider, albeit briefly, the empire of Justinian I and the state at the turn of the seventh century, the difference will be striking.

The geopolitical changes on the surface of society are immediately apparent. By the end of the seventh century, the empire had lost to the Arabs the rich Oriental provinces (Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine, Egypt) and by 711 the Arabs had taken possession of

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<sup>1</sup> Without going into a detailed bibliography, we refer to D. ZAKYTHINOS, *La grande brèche dans la tradition historique de l'Hellénisme, du septième au neuvième siècle*, *Χαριστήριον εις τὸν Ἀ. Σ. Ὀρλάνδου* 3, Athens 1966, 300-326; G. OSTROGORSKY, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates*, Munich 1963, 77-122 and ID., *Über die vermeintliche Reformtätigkeit der Isaurier*, *BZ* 30, 1929/30, 394-400; J. KARAYANNOPOULOS, *Über die vermeintliche Reformtätigkeit des Kaisers Herakleios*, *JÖB* 10, 1961, 53-72; J. HALDON, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1990. See also, W. BRANDES, ‘Und das Licht scheint in der Finsternis, und die Finsternis hat's nicht begriffen’ (Joh I,5), *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 11, 1992, 95-102 for a review of HALDON.

the whole North African coast; ca. 680 the Protobulgars occupied the land between the Danube and the Balkan mountains, the territory of the former Roman province of Moesia; even earlier, in the last decades of the sixth century, the Visigoths conquered Cordoba and other Roman strongholds in Spain, and in 568 the Lombards began the invasion into North Italy that was completed in 751, when they entered Ravenna. The empire contracted markedly.

Its administration changed as well. Today, we still question the time of the introduction of the thematic system—the first or the second half of the seventh century. Whatever the answer, it took place in the seventh century. Truly, we may discover the forerunners of the thematic system in the Justinianic and post-Justinianic empire, first of all in the form of the exarchates of Ravenna and of Carthage, as well as in a more or less consistent replacement of the complex set of provincial units by four or five large and largely militarized themes which were subsequently developed in the seventh century.<sup>2</sup>

As for the central administration, Haldon is probably correct when he writes that “the system of revenue extraction and administration seems to have continued to operate uninterrupted until the early seventh century” and that later on “a number of changes seem to have taken place” so that “the whole system underwent a transformation.”<sup>3</sup> This book is not the proper place to give a detailed account of Byzantine fiscal terminology, since even scholars may have only a vague idea what many of these terms mean.<sup>4</sup> A more palpable change is the replacement of the praetorian prefecture, the cornerstone of the civil administration in the Late Roman empire, by the independent departments usually headed by the so-called *logothetai*, a term that in the sixth century was applied only to various low-ranking fiscal officials: the praetorian prefect did not survive the reign of Herakleios (610-41), and from the same (seventh) century on, the *logothetai* of departments begin to appear in our sources.<sup>5</sup> The army underwent substantial change in the

<sup>2</sup> Literature on the themes is enormous; see first of all A. PERTUSI, *La formation des thèmes byzantins*, Munich 1958; J. KARAYANNOPULOS, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung*, Munich 1959; R. J. LILIE, *Die zweihundertjährige Reform. Zu den Anfängen der Themenorganisation im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert*, *BS* 45, 1984, 27-39, 190-201.

<sup>3</sup> HALDON, *Seventh Century*, 180.

<sup>4</sup> As N. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)*, Athens 1996 [National Hellenic Research Foundation. Institute for Byzantine Research. Monographs 2], 24f., construes it, there was no rupture in the political and administrative life of the empire between the fifth and twelfth centuries, yet “the general image of the fiscal system of the eleventh century is completely different from that of the sixth.”

<sup>5</sup> There is no general survey of the Byzantine administration in the seventh century. The book by OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, deals with a period two centuries later, but contains some references to the previous centuries.

seventh century: besides the creation of the thematic units, stationed in fixed military districts, hereditary military service was reimposed and was rewarded by land.<sup>6</sup>

More relevant for our purpose is the change in the structure of society itself. It used to be established opinion, supported by such first-rate scholars as F. Dölger and M. Ja. Sjužumov, that the ancient *polis* continued to exist through the whole history of Byzantium. In 1954, this view was challenged, although this critical approach was immediately criticized by several Byzantinists, notably Ostrogorskij.<sup>7</sup> Ostrogorskij was ready to accept the decline of the urban system as a political phenomenon, as occurred in the Balkans where, he thought, the ancient city was destroyed by enemy invasions, but he categorically denied the inner crisis of the *polis* which allegedly brought about the collapse of the urban network in Asia Minor. In the decades after the 1950s, the attitude toward the problem of Byzantine cities changed radically. Today the crisis of the *polis* in the seventh century is generally acknowledged and the former “unorthodox” view has become orthodox. Certainly, the elements of this crisis can be traced to an earlier period, such as the time immediately following the reign of Justinian.<sup>8</sup>

What forms did this crisis take? First of all (and this can be deduced from numerous findings of hoards as well as from regular excavations of individual towns), monetary circulation contracted drastically. The Byzantine government was still minting, though in minimal quantities, the gold coins that served not only as an instrument for payment but also as sign of authority, a powerful propaganda tool; and copper denominations employed for practical market transactions almost ceased to be struck in the second half of the seventh century. The data concerning monetary circulation and the barter economy are scanty, but it is noteworthy that in the first half of the ninth century, an epistolographer known as Ignatios the Deacon described two taxes imposed on churches which were exacted in grain, not money. He relates that the grain was transported to the capital not by “free” merchants, but in the form of *corvée*. Theophanes the Confessor provides us with figures on the operation of the fair in Ephesus in the eighth century; the amount of money paid there as customs fees, *kommerkion* (100 pounds of gold), is ridiculously low for a city that continued to constitute one of the most important trade centers in the sixth century.

<sup>6</sup> J. HALDON, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550-950. A Study on the Origins of the Stratiotika Ktemata*, Vienna 1979 [Öster. Ak. d. Wiss. Philos.-hist. Kl., Sitzungsberichte 357], Vienna 1979. Cf. W. TREADGOLD, *Byzantium and its Army. 284-1081*, Stanford Calif. 1995, 21-27.

<sup>7</sup> A. KAZHDAN, *Vizantijskie goroda v VII-XI vv.*, *Sovetskaja Archeologija* 21, 1954, 164-183 and, in a revised form: ID., *Derevnja i gorod v Vizantii IX-X vv.*, Moscow 1960, 250-300; G. OSTROGORSKY, *Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages*, *DOP* 13, 1959, 47-66, repr. in ID., *Zur byzantinischen Geschichte*, Darmstadt 1973, 99-118 (KAZHDAN's rejoinder in *Voprosy istorii* 8, 1960, 208f.). See a useful survey of the historiography of the problem in W. BRANDES, *Die byzantinische Stadt Kleinasien im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert. Ein Forschungsbericht*, *Klio* 70, 1988, 176-208.

<sup>8</sup> See especially H. SARADI MENDELOVICI, *The Demise of the Ancient City and the Emergence of the Mediaeval City in the Eastern Roman Empire*, *Échos du monde classique* 32, 1988, 365-401.



The construction of new public edifices practically stopped after the first half of the seventh century, unless we choose to count fortifications that were built here and there. Even in Constantinople, where the Justinianic age saw a veritable boom in church architecture, building became dormant until the ninth century. We know less about the situation in provincial towns, yet some conclusions can be drawn thanks to the publication of the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, a province by province geographical survey of the Byzantine empire. Let us consider briefly the data collected in a volume of this series devoted to Cappadocia, Charsianon, Sebasteia and Lykandos.<sup>9</sup> According to the authors, Cappadocian and neighboring towns had few remains dating from after the sixth century: thus Komana was a deserted site by the time of the Arab invasion, and Nazianzos has no monuments after the fifth century. A large group of settlements appears, after the sixth century, as bishoprics: besides Komana and Nazianzos, this can be seen in the case of Euaissa, Kamouliana, Kiskisos, Parnassos, Sasima and elsewhere. Yet to be a bishopric was not the same thing as to be an economic and cultural center: we find in the book a site called Doara which was a bishop's see but is characterized by the authors as a village. The authors register several cases where the churches of the seventh century are known (Alissar, Anatepe, Sivasa, Yedikapulu) but unfortunately we are not informed whether these churches belong to late antiquity (the first half of the century) or to the Dark Century (its second half). In Arranzos, however, the church is dated to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century, i.e. to the preceding period. A closer look at the data referring to the largest centers in this area reveals the following: Herakleia was rurified (in the mid-tenth century it is defined as a *kome*); Melitene appears (again in the tenth century) as a *kouratoreia*, and Arabissos (in the eleventh century) as an *episkepsis* — both terms designated imperial estates. Both Koloneia and Caesarea of this time are described in the book as being no more than *Truppensammelpunkte*; in Koloneia no Byzantine monuments are reported; in Caesarea only *frühbyzantinische*, i.e. of late antiquity. F. Trombley drew attention to Michael the Syrian's description of Caesarea in 647: the Hagarenes, Michael says, beheld the beauty of its buildings, churches and monasteries.<sup>10</sup> Here it is indicative that churches and monasteries, and not specifically urban edifices, were noted first. Mokissos, Nyssa and Sebasteia, after the sixth century, figured only as bishoprics; Sebasteia, which had ramparts in the time of Justinian, had no city walls in 1059; Nyssa lay in ruins in 838. Tyana was completely ruined by wars between 706 and 831, and replaced by Nakida as the capital of Cappadocia; nothing, however, about urban activity in Nakida is reported. Thus there are no traces of a "thriving" urban civilization in Cappadocia after the seventh century or even, for that matter, after 600.

<sup>9</sup> F. HILD-M. RESTLE, *Kappadokien*, Vienna 1981 [TIB 2].

<sup>10</sup> F. TROMBLEY, *The Decline of the Seventh-Century Town*, *Studies in Honor of M. A. Anastos*, Malibu 1985, 79f.

Less revealing is the material from Galatia and Lycaonia,<sup>11</sup> but the pattern seems to be the same. If we leave aside the settlements that possess what is vaguely described as "Byzantine" spolia, as well as bishoprics, the settlements in Galatia and Lycaonia reveal the following picture. There were numerous Byzantine strongholds (*Burg* or *Festung* in K. Belke's terminology), either undated or dated to the ninth through twelfth centuries. There were ancient cities that did not survive the seventh century: Ankara, in which Belke observes an "Umgestaltung der spätantiken Stadtbilde"; Derbe, which was transformed from city into village, although the date of this shift is not indicated; Goeleon, which was a *polis* in the seventh century but a village in the tenth; Korna, Leontopolis-Isaura, Mennek Kalesi, Myrikion and Orkistos were cities (sometimes described as flourishing) in "the early Byzantine period" (in Belke's terminology, that is in the fourth and fifth centuries), but later show no traces of Byzantine urban life (with the exception of an inscription in Orkistos naming Michael Bourtzes that is to be dated not to the tenth century but ca. 1081).<sup>12</sup> Certainly, there were in this area larger settlements, such as Amorion or Ikonion, which played a key role in the military history of Byzantium, but we are not informed about their fate in the seventh century. It is typical of the changing image of the city that in Ikonion Belke registers the remnants of a Roman amphitheater and of "middle-Byzantine" (whatever that means) churches.

We may justifiably claim, therefore, that the crisis of the *polis* —contrary to Ostrogorskij's view— did not fail to affect Asia Minor: where the ancient cities were not ruralized, they were usually transformed into fortresses. The Arab geographer Ibn Khurdadbeh, in his *Routes and Kingdoms*, mentions but few towns in Asia Minor (usually one per theme) and dozens of strongholds. And the same picture emerges from Theophanes Confessor: in the first half of his *Chronography* the city appears as *polis* while the term *kastron* is extremely rare; in the second half, from the reign of Herakleios on, the term *polis* becomes less frequent (often applied, however, to Constantinople) while *kastron* is quite common.

It is natural that at such an economic and political juncture the old municipal institutions (i.e. city councils, city lawyers, universities and schools, libraries, hippodromes) either declined or disappeared altogether (true, the process started much earlier but it was not complete before the seventh century). The theater found a defender in Chorikios of Gaza (sixth century) who wrote an *Apology of the Mimes*, but was banned by the end of the seventh century, the actors surviving as jesters at the court or at public festivities; the circus factions, so active in the sixth and seventh centuries, were eventually transformed into bystanders at the imperial ceremonies.

The Church occupied the vacuum created by the waning of urban institutions. Monasteries —the non-conformists *par excellence* in the fourth through sixth centuries—

<sup>11</sup> K. BELKE, *Galatien und Lykaonien*, Vienna 1984 [TIB 4].

<sup>12</sup> J.-C. CHEYNET-J.-F. VANNIER, *Études prosopographiques*, Paris 1986 [Byzantina Sorbonensia 5], 44, no. 21.

were not only "domesticated" and put under the surveillance of the episcopate, but now became the primary guardians of the social order and culture.

We know the situation in the village of the seventh century even less than that in the town. We can only hypothesize that the decline of the *polis* was accompanied by the disappearance of the urban aristocracy, the famous *curiales* (*decuriones*), which must have led to a relative emancipation of the countryside. The debate continues: did extensive land ownership still exist in the seventh and eighth centuries? However, we must acknowledge that there is no direct evidence either of large estates or of dependent *coloni* in this period. Much ink has been spilled in order to discount the so-called *Farmer's Law*, the rural code of the seventh or eighth century, but it is still impossible to claim that these attempts have succeeded. If we take the document at face value, it would seem to constitute forceful evidence of the predominance of a free peasantry in the countryside (at least, in a part of the countryside) of post-Justinianic times.

We may therefore suggest that in the seventh century there was a shift from the vanishing urban culture toward the cultural predominance of the countryside. It is paradoxical that it was during the Dark Century, after the brilliance of Justinian's rule, that some technological progress can be seen to have occurred in the village: hard wheat was introduced, water mills became common, livestock began to play a larger part in the rural economy, and the system of harnessing improved. It is paradoxical, too, that the loss of the larger granaries (Egypt, North Africa, later Sicily) was not accompanied by persistent famine—something was done in the countryside to bring supply and demand into balance. The change was not radical, of course, and agriculture retained, in principle, its Roman (Mediterranean) character, qualified by the climate and soil of the region—but it seems plausible that some alterations in rural production took place as the village shook off the oppressive control of the late Roman *municipium*.<sup>13</sup>

It is plausible to hypothesize that the structure of the ruling class changed as well. On the one hand, the aristocracy became increasingly concentrated in Constantinople; linked to the imperial court, it grew dependent on the imperial will. More and more, the aristocrat became identified as a bureaucrat, authority being not inherited, but delegated to him from above. On the other hand, the provincial aristocracy is unseen in the sources of this period: it lost its economic, social and cultural backbone in the waning town and either declined or moved to the capital. In the sources of the late seventh or eighth centuries we do not meet hereditary nobility, nobility of birth (the statement should not be taken as an absolute: of course, there are known cases when the sons of important persons assumed important positions). The seminal symbol of noble descent, the aristocratic family name, had already

<sup>13</sup> The traditional concept of the depopulation of the late Roman countryside was keenly rejected by T. LEWIT, *Agricultural Production in the Roman Economy*, Oxford 1991; the author concentrated on western provinces of the third and fourth centuries, but takes into consideration the scanty eastern material as well.

disappeared by the fifth century and does not seem to have been revived much before the tenth century (sigillographic data show that as a widespread phenomenon the family name was used only after 1000). In Byzantium (as in the Roman empire) the emperor—head and symbol of the state machine—was not a representative of the ruling lineage. Unlike the Frankish Merovingians and Kievan Rurikids, whose kingship depended on kinship, Byzantine emperors held their throne by force, intrigue and usurpation. The middle of the seventh century abounds with conflicts within the imperial family and with mutilations of the emperor's closest relatives in order to abrogate their claims to the throne. The end of the seventh and the early eighth centuries, however, are especially rich in usurpations, revealing dependence of the throne on the military forces of the newly created themes. It is indicative that the dynasties of the eighth through tenth centuries bear "local" appellations: Isaurians, Amorians, Macedonians, and only thereafter is the scene taken by royal lines named after lineage: Doukai, Komnenoi, Laskarids, Palaiologoi.

Constantinople, albeit not flourishing economically and culturally in the seventh and eighth centuries,<sup>14</sup> was the focal point and probably the only significant urban center of the empire after the Arab conquest of Alexandria and Antioch (Rome, quite small by this time, was outside the Constantinopolitan authority, and had been so since, at the latest, the eighth century, while Thessalonike was temporarily crippled by the Slav attacks of the seventh century).

All these changes help to explain the shift in social allegiance of the population of the empire or, at least, of its higher strata: the citizens of the Roman empire saw themselves primarily as the denizens of a *polis* and as descendants of a lineage. Since both institutions were severely weakened in the seventh century, the lower unit, the nuclear family, began to play a more important social role. From Justinian's time to the legislation of Leo III (717-41), the so-called *Ecloga*, we may observe the slow process of strengthening familial links (formalization of marriage, restriction of divorce, etc.);<sup>15</sup> unlike the Transalpine feudal states, Byzantium seems to have produced no new horizontal or vertical social links of any significance (for instance, a feudal hierarchy, town communities, monastic orders) to replace the old municipal relations; individualism was a marked feature of Byzantine society. Rather, the Byzantines reinforced two transcendent allegiances: toward the State (this can be considered as inherited from the Roman empire but strengthened as the municipal allegiance faded and disappeared) and toward the Church (an allegiance that

<sup>14</sup> It was C. MANGO, *The Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre*, *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*, New Rochelle NY 1986, 128f., repr. in ID., *Studies on Constantinople*, Aldershot 1993, pt. I, who questioned the traditional view of the "ever flourishing" Constantinople.

<sup>15</sup> On this process see H. HUNGER, *Christliches und nichtchristliches im byzantinischen Ehe-recht*, *Österreichisches Archiv für Kirchenrecht* 18, 1967, 305-325, repr. in ID., *Byzantinische Grundlagenforschung*, London 1973, pt. XI.

became uniform after the major rivals of Chalcedonianism, i.e. Monophysitism and Nestorianism, fell within the political sphere of the Caliphate in the seventh century). The last remnants of Monophysitism, or so-called Monotheletism, still lingered on in the early eighth century, but thereafter all forms of religious nonconformism, which in the Late Roman period functioned as competing churches and claimed their part in the administration of the empire, were reduced to non-Orthodox heresies. The concept of the sole universal emperor (later titled the *basileus of the Rhomaioi*) was established in the Late Roman empire after the crisis of the tetrarchy and the collapse of the Western empire; it was supplemented, however, by religious uniformity. Extreme individualism on the lower level of society went side by side with the extreme collectivism on its higher level.

These economic and social changes were accompanied by a restructuring of spiritual life. In the first place, this is evidenced quantitatively: the Byzantines, after the mid-seventh century, built less, painted less, wrote less and copied fewer books than in the preceding epoch—indeed, drastically less. The second half of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh century harbored numerous historians of significance (see below, p. 19); thereafter, we do not encounter a single historical work until the late eighth century. Hagiography thrived in the first half and the middle of the seventh century, but the stream almost dried up in the second half of the century. Secular and ecclesiastical poetry flourished in the sixth century, particularly in Egypt and Constantinople, but nothing of this kind is known from the next decades. Political publicists were active in the sixth century, being represented by such names as Agapetos, the patrikios Menas (if we accept that he was the author of the *Dialogue with the referendarius Thomas*) and John Lydos. The genre, however, disappeared in the seventh century. If we turn to theology we may observe not only a quantitative decline but a total exhaustion of the creative spirit that had been so evident in the works of pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite, Maximos the Confessor or John of the Klimax—nothing equal to them is to be found in the second half of the seventh century. The same phenomenon unfolds in the sphere of science: John Philoponos, Anthemios of Tralles, Eutokios of Askalon, Kosmas Indikopleustes, Aetios of Amida—all were active in the sixth century. And Stephen of Alexandria (or of Athens) continued working in the first quarter of the seventh century. Scientific activity, however, had died out by the middle of the seventh century—at any rate, we know nothing of serious scientific works produced after that time.

One might wish to advance the view (and many scholars actually have done so) that external dangers were responsible for the decline in literature and science, in architecture and painting. It is true that the Persian and Arab wars were raging in the reigns of Herakleios and his heirs. But did such wars really constitute an insurmountable obstacle for the development of literature and science? Were not some periods of military activity favorable for literary and scientific production? One needs only to mention Athens in the time of the Persian and Peloponnesian wars. The situation in late Byzantium was probably no less tragic than in the seventh century; yet none could complain of the “barrenness” of

spiritual life in the fourteenth-century Empire of Constantinople. But the crisis of the *polis*, the disappearance of the local aristocracy (the main consumer of literary-rhetorical exercises), the closure of universities, the prohibition of theatrical performances, all served to change the cultural environment. The efficient tiller of land and the shepherd, the ascetic monk, the bishop inculcating his flock in elementary rules of faith and conduct, the rude warrior and the functionary concerned with his shaky career formed a poor market for intellectual goods. The disparaging appellation “Dark Ages” or “Dark Century” seems to be properly applied to the period after ca. 650. This is where we begin—not with the sparkling brilliance of Prokopios and Romanos the Melode, nor under the vaults of Hagia Sophia, but in the troubled and crude world of the descendants of Herakleios.

True, intellectual activity dimmed, but it nevertheless managed to maintain a glimmer, and it is possible to indicate some names (as well as some anonymous works) of the *literati* of the late seventh and early eighth century. It is not hard to establish a list of intellectuals who lived and worked in this gloomy time. It is much more difficult to determine the content and nature of their contribution to the development of Byzantine literature.

There are two points which must be taken into account when endeavoring to evaluate the development of Byzantine literature during the Dark Century. Firstly, the change we observe in the literary production of the eastern part of the former Roman empire was not merely a local phenomenon. In the West the period after Boethius and Cassiodorus manifests the decline of classic traditions and the beginning of medieval literary activity, first in a transformed Latin, then in “barbaric” idioms. However, the break with the glorious past was in the West more evident and more thorough than in Byzantium.

Secondly, the “medievalization” of Byzantine literature was, in more senses than one, prepared during the Late Roman period. Unquestionably, the environment of the late antique *polis* constituted fertile soil for the continuation of ancient literary traditions: Prokopios of Caesarea and Agathias of Myrina, to name just two, not only wrote uncorrupted Greek, but envisaged the world in images hardly different from those of their classical predecessors. Nevertheless, some scions of the new (though more in the sphere of content than language and style) can be observed. Malalas was a harbinger of medieval Chronography, and the so-called epic martyria were to pave the way for the most popular genre of Byzantine prose. Great patristic writers, from John Chrysostom to Romanos the Melode, stood usually between the two worlds: classical in their roots they presaged the themes and the approaches of later Byzantine authors.

This ambiguous, or amphibious, period in the evolution of Greek literature deserves special investigation. We shall begin beyond its borders, even though we acknowledge that the Late Roman era witnessed not merely the twilight of Antiquity, but also the dawn of Byzantine, medieval literature. The break with Antiquity was in Byzantium less obvious than in the West: there was no mass settlement of aliens on Byzantine territory, no drastic infusion of a mythological layer created and cherished outside the Mediterranean, no replacement of the traditional language by fresh dialects teeming with unknown concepts

and formulas. The classical heritage survived in Byzantium more stubbornly than in the dispersed cultural centers of the West; but it is surely undeniable that beneath the antique veneer new processes were taking place, and it is with this view in mind that we shall attempt a rereading of Byzantine literary production of the Dark Age and beyond.

## PART ONE

*Literature from the late seventh to the mid-eighth centuries*

## CHAPTER ONE

### FAREWELL TO HISTORICITY

#### *A. Historiographical fatigue*

It is remarkable how deeply interested the sixth and early seventh-century Roman empire was in historical writing. A series of more or less talented historians (Prokopios, Agathias, Menandros Protiktor, Theophylaktos Simokatta, George of Pisidia, as well as the Syrian Monophysite John of Ephesus) described contemporary events from the period of Justinian I to Herakleios, while the genre of world chronicle was developed by such writers as Malalas and the anonymous author of the *Paschal Chronicle*. Yet, suddenly, after the middle of the seventh century, the writing of history practically ceased in the Byzantine empire: M. Whitby emphasizes the existence of a hiatus in the development of historical writing from the time of Herakleios to the end of the eighth century; he speaks of the end of traditional historiography,<sup>1</sup> although he does discuss “the shadowy Traianus Patricius” and “the extremely fragmentary Great Chronographer”. In the West there appears to have been a similar change of attitude toward history writing: Gregory of Tours (d. 594) represents the end, practically, of the late classical period of Latin Chronography. He was followed only by Fredegar and his continuators, who do not go beyond the mid-seventh century. Their work is commonly characterized as the single substantial historical composition of the seventh century. The revival, however, started here earlier than in Byzantium: in 731 Beda completed his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and around the same time an anonymous writer in Neustria began the book on the origin of the Frankish kings. Only a handful of chronographical works can be connected with the

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<sup>1</sup> M. WHITBY, Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, Princeton NJ 1992, 66f.

Byzantine Dark Century, and these are either doubtful or insignificant. We know the following about them:

1. Trajanos Patrikios is characterized by Theophanes as a historian who identifies the Goths with the Scythians (ed. De Boor, 66.2-3); according to a gloss in the *Souda* (ed. A. Adler, vol. 4, 1935, 582, no. 901), he flourished under Justinian II (685-95, 705-11) and produced a short chronicle; following the *Souda*, scholars assumed that the *Chronicle* by Trajanos reached 713 and served as a common source for Nikephoros and Theophanes.<sup>2</sup> De Boor, however, questioned the possibility of Theophanes using a historian who had worked ca. 713 and suggested that Trajanos the chronicler was a general of Valens who was dispatched against the Goths (Theoph., 62.10-11); De Boor's doubts<sup>3</sup> have been neglected by Byzantinists.

2. The Great Chronographer: we shall return to this work later, while examining Theophanes and Nikephoros (see below, p. 214f.).

3. Hippolytos of Thebes lived ca. 650-750.<sup>4</sup> His *Chronicle* dealt primarily with the chronology of biblical events and genealogy of biblical personages, rarely mentioning later names and facts (e.g., Constantine the Great or the Council of Nicaea of 325).

4. Theophanios' *Chronicle* is a short work by an otherwise unknown monk. The editor, E. von Dobschütz, dates it to 710. It concerns the calculation of the seven ages of mankind (i.e. infant, child, adolescent, young man, mature man, old man, and very old man). On the basis of his calculations Theophanios predicts the end of the world in 880.<sup>5</sup>

Thus we may state, with Whitby, that the century and a half after George of Pisidia and the *Paschal Chronicle* was a barren period in the development of Byzantine historical writing. Immediately the vacuum was filled by a pseudo-historical genre, in which fantastic images of the past merged with even more fantastic eschatological or apocalyptic prophecy, seasoned with political prognostication. True, eschatology was not a seventh-century invention,<sup>6</sup> but Roman eschatological theories, from Origen to Maximos the Confessor, were constructed on a philosophical and theological basis, focusing on the conflict between the antique optimism of universal salvation and the Christian concept of individual salvation or damnation as the supremely transcendent gift of God.<sup>7</sup> The apocalyptic tradition of the late seventh century evolved not as a theology of individual

<sup>2</sup> Gy. MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica* 1, Berlin 1958, 457, 532. Cf. T. LOUNGHIS, *Η ιδεολογία της βυζαντινής ιστοριογραφίας*, Athens 1993, 41f., 47.

<sup>3</sup> C. DE BOOR, *Der Historiker Traianus*, *Hermes* 17, 1882, 489-492. Cf. C. MANGO, in *Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*, Washington DC 1990 [CFHB XIII], 16f.

<sup>4</sup> F. DIEKAMP, *Hippolytos von Theben*, Münster i.W. 1898; on the date p. 157.

<sup>5</sup> E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Coislinianus* 296, *BZ* 12, 1903, 549-567.

<sup>6</sup> See G. PODSKALSKY, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*, Munich 1972.

<sup>7</sup> B. D. DALEY, *Apokatastasis and 'Honorable Silence' in the Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor*, in F. HEINZER-Ch. SCHÖNBORN (eds.), *Maximus Confessor*, Fribourg 1982, 309-339.

salvation, but as a narrative about the past and future of political bodies, and, as such, belongs to the field of literature.

### B. Pseudo-history of pseudo-Methodios

A. LOLOS, *Die Apokalypse des Ps.-Methodios*, Meisenheim am Glan 1976, and

ID., *Die dritte und vierte Redaktion des Ps.-Methodios*, Meisenheim am Glan 1978

The so-called *Apocalypsis*<sup>8</sup> is ascribed to Methodios of Patara or Olympos, the renowned Church father of the early fourth century. The pseudonymous author wrote in Syriac in North Mesopotamia. The traditional date of the Syriac version is the mid-seventh century,<sup>9</sup> although some scholars move the time of compilation closer to the end of the seventh century.<sup>10</sup> The Greek version cannot be earlier than 678, since it alludes to the Arab siege of Constantinople (chapter XIII.7), but this gives us only a *terminus post quem*.

The *Apocalypsis* attracted the attention of various scholars.<sup>11</sup> It consists of two parts: historical (ch. I-IX) and prophetic (ch. X-XIV), the historical being divided, in turn, into three sections. The first section is "biblical", comprising the history from Adam to Nimrod; the second deals with the creation of cities and of the earlier empires by Moneton, the son of Noah, and by Nimrod, after which the period of wars begins; the third section is devoted to Alexander the Great, his widow and his sons. Historical facts as presented in the *Apocalypsis* are fantastic: we are told, for instance, that Byzas (the legendary eponymous founder of Byzantium) married Alexander's widow or that Dareios "the Medos" sired Chosroes "the Persian". The core of the second, prophetic, part is the conquest of Persia and the Roman empire by the Ishmaelites. The Greek version lists the territories to be occupied by the Arabs: Armenia, Cappadocia, Sicily, Syria, Cilicia, Hellas, Romania, "the islands of the sea", Egypt (and Syria again), and later on Phrygia, Pamphylia and Bithynia, as well as individual cities of the East, such as Ephesus, Pergamon and Malagina.<sup>12</sup> Then

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Th. FRENZ, *Textkritische Untersuchungen zu 'Pseudo-Methodios'*, *BZ* 80, 1987, 50-58.

<sup>9</sup> P. J. ALEXANDER, *Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources*, *The American Historical Review* 73, 1968, repr. in ID., *History*, pt. XII, 1000.

<sup>10</sup> S. BROCK, *Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History*, *BMGS* 2, 1976, 34.

<sup>11</sup> See W. BRANDES, *Endzeitvorstellungen und Lebenstrost in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit* (7.-9. Jahrhundert), *Varia* III, Bonn 1991 [Poikila byzantina 11], 16-26; G. J. REININCK, *Ps.-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam*, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, 1, Princeton NJ 1992, 149-187; L. G. PATTERSON, *Methodius' Millenarianism*, *Studia Patristica* 24, 1993, 306-315; V. TÜPKOVA ZAIMOVA, *Problèmes de terminologie étatique chez pseudo-Méthodius de Patara*, *Études Balkaniques* 28, no. 3-4, 1992, 111-116.

<sup>12</sup> LOLOS, *Die Apokalypse*, 120, n. 3, explains Malagina as "Ort in Arabien." In fact, Malagina was a district in Bithynia.

the Ishmaelites are to pitch their tents in front of the city of Byzas, to break the gate of Xylokerkos (near the Golden gate) and encroach on the forum Bovis and the Xerolophos. The Ishmaelites appear first in the historical part (ch. V.3-6). There they are described as conquerors of Rome, Illyricum, Thessalonike and "Sardania," as well as a Gigetón(?), but ps.-Methodios reminds his readers that Gedeon liberated Israel from the servitude to "the children of Ishmael", and this serves him as a prefiguration of the future victory. The author predicts that an emperor of the *Hellenes* or *Rhomaioi* will rise up "like a warrior heated with wine" (Ps. 77.65) and defeat the Arabs, take their wives and children captive and establish peace and serenity on Earth.<sup>13</sup> But the victory over the Arabs is not the last stage of the historical cycle: the gate of the North will fly open, powerful and cruel tribes will invade the land. Distanced from the Arabs in eschatological time, the tribes of the North are most probably meant to represent their contemporaries, the Bulgarians, the main threat on the northern border of the late seventh and eighth centuries. The actions in the final episode are transcendental: God, sympathizing with the suffering of mankind, will send his servants Enoch and Elias to debunk the deception of the Son of Perdition, the tribes will leave the evil camp and join the righteous, and the "sign that heralds the Son of Man" will appear, destroying the Son of Perdition and throwing the impious into Hell.

The message of the *Apocalypsis* is clear: God will give the Byzantines victory over the infidel and the northern barbarians. The Syriac version stresses the decisive role of the Cross in the destruction of the Ishmaelites,<sup>14</sup> a theme that has its parallel in the poetry of Kosmas the Melode (see below, p. 112-118).

### C. Ahistoric hagiography

Hagiography flourished in the sixth and the early seventh centuries, the greatest names of the time being Cyril of Scythopolis, John Moschos, Sophronios of Jerusalem and Leontios of Neapolis. The typical feature of the hagiographers of this period was what we

<sup>13</sup> See P. J. ALEXANDER, The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and its Messianic Origin, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41, 1978, 1-15, and ID., Byzantium and the Migration of Literary Works and Motifs: the Legend of the Last Roman Emperor, *Medievalia and Humanistica* 2, 1971, repr. in ID., *History*, pt. XII, 47-68; G. J. REININCK, Pseudo-Methodios und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser, *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, Leuven 1988, 82-111 and ID., Die syrischen Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende vom römischen Endkaiser, *Non nova, sed nove*, Groningen 1984, 195-209; H. SUERMANN, Der byzantinische Endkaiser in Pseudo-Methodios, *OrChr* 71, 1987, 140-155. Cf. M. V. KRIVOV, Otkrovenie psevdofodija Patarskogo kak otrazhenie narodnykh vzgljadov na arabskoe našestvie, *VizVrem* 44, 1983, 215-221.

<sup>14</sup> G. J. REININCK, Ismael, der Wildesel in der Wüste, *BZ* 75, 1982, 340 n. 25.

might call "historicity": they concentrated their attention on their contemporaries, holy men and women whom they personally knew or of whom they heard of from trustworthy witnesses. Probably the last great hagiographical discourse of the period was the biography of Theodore of Sykeon produced soon after 641 by a certain Eleusios-George<sup>15</sup> not recorded in other sources, who claimed to be (and quite likely was) the saint's disciple.

Theodore (d. 613) was the son of a country prostitute in Galatia; he became a hermit, wonder-worker and eventually bishop of Anastasioupolis. The saint was active in the countryside, and he cared not only for men and animals but also for trees, vineyards, fields and gardens (ed. Festugière, par. 158.5-6), providing Eleusios with the opportunity to describe vivid scenes of rural "works and days", including a revolt of the peasants of the village Eukraous against the injustice of their masters; Theodore supported the *georgoi* and was arrested as a result. Eleusios also presents a village community, κοινὸν τοῦ χωρίου (par. 143.1): the peasants of the village of Apoukoumis (or Apokome?) came together, slaughtered an ox, and ate all its meat.

At the same time, the life of the saint is placed within the framework of state politics: Theodore predicted Maurice's ascent to the throne and was, in turn, rewarded with an annual donation of bread for his monastery; he healed the emperor Phokas and required him to stop his cruelty; Herakleios wrote letters to Theodore. Patriarchs (Thomas and Sergios), generals, and civic officials are among the minor characters of the *vita*. The saint is portrayed as a participant in the historical events of the empire.

Various hagiographical texts have survived from the second half of the seventh and early eighth centuries; we have miracles (*Miracles of St. Demetrios* II, pseudo-Chrysippos' *Miracles of Theodore Teron* [the Recruit], Roman *Miracles of Anastasios the Persian*, Theodore of Paphos' *Enkomion for Spyridon of Trimithont*, produced in 655—an account of the saint's miracles), tales about anchorites (*Diegeseis* of Anastasios the Monk, written ca. 691/2), and revisions of old biographies (Theodore of Trimithont wrote ca. 680 the *Vita of John Chrysostom*, based on the *Dialogue* of Palladios; George of Naxos produced an *Enkomion for Antony the Great*; however, the identification of the author as George of Naxos, a participant in the Council of 680, cannot be substantiated).

Some texts can be categorized as proper *vitae*, but they lack the intensive historicity that characterizes the work by Eleusios. The so-called *Hypomnestikon* of Theodore

<sup>15</sup> BHG 1748, ed. A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Vie de Théodore de Sykéon*, with Fr. tr., 2 vols., Brussels 1970 [SHag 48]. Much was written on this *vita*, see primarily R. CORMACK, *Writing in Gold*, London 1985, 17-49; W. KAEGI, New Evidence on the Early Reign of Heraclius, *BZ* 66, 1973, 308-330; D. BAKER, Theodore of Sykeon and the Historians, *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, Oxford 1976, 83-96; P. SPECK, Wunderheilige und Bilder, *Varia* III, Bonn 1991 [Poikila Byzantina 11], 236-246; J. O. ROSENQVIST, Asia Minor on the Threshold of the Middle Ages, *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, Stockholm 1993, 145-156 and ID., *Studien zur Syntax und Bemerkungen zum Text der Vita Theodori Syceotae*, Uppsala 1981 [Acta Universitatis Upsalensis. Studia Graeca Upsaliensia 15].



Spoudaios(?) written in 668<sup>16</sup> is not a biography but a partial description of the last years of Maximos the Confessor and Pope Martin, both persecuted by the emperor Constans II (641-68).

The anonymous *Vita and passio of Hypatios of Gangra*,<sup>17</sup> a contemporary of the emperor Constantius II (337-61), is fictitious, placing the saint in the reign of the emperor "Thelkianos", also fictitious. Another version replaces him with the "historical" Marcian (450-57), separated from Constantius by an entire century. The substance of the legend is not Hypatios' biography but fantastic episodes such as a victory over a dragon and an encounter with a talking horse.

S. Ferri, the editor, surmised that the ancient *vita* had been composed in the second half of the fifth century, and the "apocryphal" version in 500-700, but F. Halkin rejected this dating as the result of confusion. The only element in the *martyrion* that could be used (very tentatively!) for the dating of this entertaining text is the name of the Scythian king Chobar who crucified Hypatios and commanded his warriors to shoot and pelt stones at the saint. The name of Chobar, whether by coincidence or not, reminds us of Koubar, the Avar *chaganos*, as rendered in the *Miracles of St. Demetrios*. If this association is valid, the story of Hypatios must originate in the second half of the seventh century or later.

The legend of Theophilos of Adana<sup>18</sup> (it must have been written prior to the end of the eighth century since at that time it was translated into Latin by Paul the Deacon) relates how the protagonist was an *oikonomos* in Adana during the reign of Herakleios "before the Persian expedition against Romania" (ed. Radermacher, 182.6-9), but this sentence exhausts the historical information contained in the saga. The author (some manuscripts name him Eutychianos) narrates only that Theophilos, offended by an unfair and undeserved deposition, sold his soul to the Devil in order to restore his earthly position but later atoned and was saved by the Virgin.

An anonymous *Vita prior of Alypios the Stylite*<sup>19</sup> was produced most probably before the mid-eighth century. The saint lived during the reign of Herakleios, but the emperor appears only in the title of the *vita*, and the political events are neglected.

We could have expected more connections with historical reality in the anonymous *Partial tale* (μερικὴ διήγησις) of Eustolia<sup>20</sup> whose companion was Sopatra, daughter of the emperor Maurice. There is, however, no "historicity" in the *vita*, and the name Sopatra itself is either invented or distorted. According to the *Paschal Chronicle*, among Maurice's

children were three females: Anastasia, Theoktiste and Kleopatra; the hagiographer could have altered Kleopatra's name to Sopatra. We have no certain grounds on which to date the *Partial tale*: it was written after 600, but it is difficult to say precisely how long after.

It is impossible to establish a precise date for the *Vita of Matrona of Perge* (or Constantinople).<sup>21</sup> Matrona is known from other sources; she lived in the fifth century and was a staunch supporter of the Council of Chalcedon. C. Mango demonstrated that the *vita* could not be earlier than the middle of the sixth century, for it has an anachronistic reference to the church of St. Mary the New in Jerusalem that was dedicated in 543. If the quarter of Severiana, mentioned in the discourse, is the same as the district *ta Severou*, that took its name from the adoptive brother of the emperor Constans II (642-68), the *vita* must have been produced even later, in the second half of the seventh century or thereafter. The political and religious activity of the saint found no reflection in the romance-like story whose main element is Matrona's flight from her husband.

Leontios, who claimed to be *hegoumenos* of the Roman Monastery of St. Sabas at the end of the seventh century, was the author of the *Vita of Gregory of Agrigento* (Akragas).<sup>22</sup> According to the hagiographer, Gregory was born into a rich family near Agrigento, traveled to the East, and refuted in Constantinople the heresy of the "impious" (Monothelite) patriarchs Sergios, Paul II, and Kyros of Alexandria. This places him in the mid-seventh century. Then he returned to Agrigento, was elected bishop of the city, eventually was accused of immorality and thrown in jail, but was liberated by command of an emperor (whose name is not indicated). The participation in the debate with the Monothelites is the only element of historical reality touched upon by Leontios.

Several Gregories of Agrigento are known from other sources: one of them, a contemporary of Gregory the Great, was accused of wrongdoing, summoned to Rome in 591 and probably deposed. Another Gregory was an exegete who compiled a commentary on *Ecclesiastes* (PG 98, 741-1182); he must have lived before the eighth century, since the earliest manuscripts of his commentary are of the eighth-ninth centuries. Nothing is known of his life. The entry in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 251.13-252.17) gives an allegedly precise date for Saint Gregory: he was active under Justinian II and at the age of eighteen was ordained deacon by Makarios bishop of Jerusalem. This statement, however, is contradictory, since Makarios administered Jerusalem in the middle of the sixth century

<sup>16</sup> Ed. R. DEVREESSE, Le texte grec de l'Hypomnesticum de Théodore Spoudée, *AB* 53, 1935, 49-80.

<sup>17</sup> BHG 759a-c, ed. S. FERRI, Il 'Bios' e il 'Martyrion' di Hypatios di Gangrai, *SBN* 3, 1931, 69-103 with corrections in the review by F. HALKIN, *AB* 51, 1933, 393.

<sup>18</sup> BHG 1319, ed. L. RADERMACHER, *Griechische Quellen zur Faustsage*, Vienna-Leipzig 1927, 41-70, 151-219, 247-257.

<sup>19</sup> BHG 65, ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Les saints stylites*, Brussels 1923, repr. 1962 [SHag 14], 148-187.

<sup>20</sup> BHG 2141, ed. AASS Nov. IV, 216-219.

<sup>21</sup> BHG 1221, ed. AASS Nov. III, 786-823, Engl. tr. by J. FEATHERSTONE-C. MANGO in A.-M. TALBOT (ed.), *Holy Women in Byzantium*, Washington 1996, 13-64. See also E. CATAFYGIOTOU TOPPING, St. Matrona and her Friends: Sisterhood in Byzantium, *Kathegetria: Essays presented to J. Hussey*, Camberley-Surrey 1988, 211-224, cf. J. ANSON, The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: the Origin and Development of a Motif, *Viator* 5, 1974, 14.

<sup>22</sup> BHG 707, ed. A. BERGER, *Das Leben des heiligen Gregorios von Agrigent*, Berlin 1995. Another *vita* attributed to a certain Mark, *hegoumenos* of the same monastery of St. Sabas, remains unpublished. See on him E. PATLAGEAN, Les moines grecs d'Italie et l'apologie des thèses pontificales (VIIIe-IXe siècles), *Studi medievali* 5, 1964, repr. in EAD., *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance*, London 1981, pt. XIII, 579-602.



and was coeval with Justinian I. All this conflicting information leads to the conclusion that Gregory as depicted in Leontios' *vita* is a legendary figure (modeled on the contemporary of Gregory the Great?). Attribution of the *vita* of Gregory to the Dark Age is questionable: according to A. Berger, the hagiographer knew the "donation of Constantine" and therefore cannot have written earlier than in the second half of the eighth century. Berger does not exclude the possibility that Leontios produced his work in the first half of the ninth century. In any event, the *vita* is not a "historical" hagiographical discourse.

More "historical" is the anonymous *Vita of David of Thessalonike*<sup>23</sup> the core of which is David's mission to Justinian I to solicit the emperor's order to transfer the archbishop's residence from Sirmium to Thessalonike. The hagiographer states that he wrote approximately 180 years upon David's demise in 540. If this statement is taken at face value, the *vita* was written ca. 720. Another "historical" echo is the story of sixty *archons* who were arrested during their pilgrimage to Jerusalem and executed there ca. 725. The work was allegedly translated from the Syriac by the monk John.<sup>24</sup> A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus considered the discourse contemporary with the events described, but his hypothesis is not persuasive. John does not claim to have witnessed the event, but only says that he read the Syriac *hypomnema* of the martyrs and visited the place of their burial in Jerusalem.

Astonishingly, John praises Leo III as a pious and God-loving ruler (ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 2.31, 3.14-17). That drastically contradicts the Orthodox tradition and may indicate either the author's support for Iconoclastic policy or his distance—in space and time—from eighth-century Byzantium. The presentation of the Arab war is the product of fantasy: instead of actual events (the failure of the Arabs at Constantinople in 717 and their defeat at Akroinon in 740) John relates how the emperor Leo surrounded the Arab camp with water and compelled them to conclude a seven-year truce. None of this is confirmed in other available sources.

The case of the *Martyrdom of the Sixty* becomes more perplexing due to the existence of a Latin *passio* (translated from the Greek?) that relates the story of sixty soldiers taken captive and executed by the Arabs. This event took place under the emperor Herakleios.<sup>25</sup> Was the story of the sixty Constantinopolitan *archons* copied from the *passio*, and if so when? Or is the coincidence of figures accidental? We will probably never get a persuasive answer to this question.

Unlike the "biographical" *vitae* of this period, some miracles have obvious historical data: the *Miracles II of St. Demetrios* deal with the Slav attack on Thessalonike and the *Miracles of Theodore Teron* mention Ishmaelites, who took captives in the area of Pontos.

<sup>23</sup> BHG 493, ed. V. ROSE, *Leben des heiligen David von Thessalonike*, Berlin 1887.

<sup>24</sup> BHG 1217, ed. A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Mučeničestvo šestidesjati novyh svjatyh mučenikov*, PPSb XII/1, 1892.

<sup>25</sup> The Latin *passio* was published by H. DELEHAYE, *Passio sanctorum sexaginta martyrorum*, AB 23, 1904, 289-307. On the relation between the two texts, G. HUXLEY, *The Sixty Martyrs of Jerusalem*, GRBS 18, 1977, 369-374.

These stories, however, are episodic and locally restricted. The hagiographical texts that we consider—with many provisos—as belonging to the Dark Century are irrelevant to historicity: their center of gravity is individual piety and morality, and they are usually placed in an abstract or fantastical setting, unfettered by "historical limitations." Probably the most remarkable of the hagiographical discourses created during this period is the *Miracles of St. Artemios*.

### D. Anonymous miracles of St. Artemios (BHG 173)

Ed. A. I. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Varia graeca sacra*, St. Petersburg 1909, 1-75;  
Engl. tr. V. S. CRISAFULLI - J. W. NESBITT, *The Miracles of St. Artemios*, Leiden-New York-Cologne 1997 [The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453. Volume 13]

The only thing we know about the author of the *Miracles* is that he was a contemporary of the emperor Constans II (641-68) and wrote his "tale" (διήγησις) of the miracles of the holy martyr and thaumaturge Artemios after 656.<sup>26</sup> Most probably, he either was born in Constantinople or had lived there for a long while. At any rate, the capital, the Queen of *poleis*, is in the forefront of the story.<sup>27</sup> The hagiographer knows its topography well: he mentions the *embolos*, near which the palace of Vivianus seems to have been located; the district of Rufinus; the porticoes of Domninos; Hebdomon and Magnaura; Argyropolis (on the Bosphorus); and various shrines. The people acting in the *Miracles* are predominantly Constantinopolitan craftsmen and merchants (smiths, a candlemaker, a butcher, a tanner, a shipwright, a maker of bows, an *argyroprates* [a money-changer], a wine-merchant, a *pragmateutes* [merchant in general]), sailors and captains. Some people originate from other places, but we see them either when they arrive in Constantinople or when they depart from it to sail home. Certain personages are remnants of the late antique past: numerous doctors, an actor (*skenikos*), a poet of the *meros* of the Blues and a *dioiketes* of the same faction, and a woman who ran a bathhouse. Some Constantinopolitan officials

<sup>26</sup> A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Varia Graeca Sacra*, S. Petersburg 1909, p. II; cf. C. MANGO, *On the History of the Templon and the Martyrion of St. Artemios in Constantinople*, *Zograf* 10, 1979, repr. in ID., *Studies on Constantinople*, Aldershot 1993, pt. XV, 40-43. On the *Miracles* see also: S. A. ŽEBELEV, *Čudesá sv. Artemija*, *Sbornik v čest' V. I. Lamanskogo* 1, 1904, 451-473; L. RYDÉN, *Kirkan som sjukhus. Om den helige Artemios' mirakler*, *Religion och Bibel* 44, 1985/87, 3-16; H. DELEHAYE, *Les recueils antiques de miracles des saints*, AB 43, 1925, 32-38.

<sup>27</sup> L. RYDÉN, *Gaza, Emesa and Constantinople: Late Ancient Cities in the Light of Hagiography*, *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, Stockholm 1993, 140-144. Cf. P. MAAS, *Artemioskult in Konstantinopel*, *BNJbb* 1, 1920, 377-384; N. H. BAYNES, *Topographica Constantinopolitana*, *JHS* 31, 1911, 266-268; J.-P. SODINI, *Les cryptes d'autel paléochrétiennes: essai de classification*, *TM* 8, 1981, 440-443.

play a role in the *Miracles*, mostly functionaries of low rank: Drosos, former *komentaresios*, eventually secretary; a *chartoularios* named George; a *xenodochos* of a hospice, an *apokrisiarios*, and also the wife of a courtier. In the same manner the clerics represented in the *Diegesis* are, first and foremost, those of lower grades.<sup>28</sup> People of higher ranks usually appear not as protagonists of stories but as their relatives or masters: thus the senator, *patrikios* and judge Sergios, took care of his sick relative; a sick servant of a *hegoumenos* saw in a dream another senator, a friend of his master; a thief was brought before the eparch Theodore. Emperors are mentioned on several occasions; they are, however, not personages in stories but eponyms, indicators of time.

This Constantinopolitan character distinguishes the *Miracles* from most hagiographical works of the preceding period, which were largely connected with the ambiance of provincial cities. Only four *vitae* of the fifth and sixth centuries (the *Vita of Hypatios of Rufinianae* by Kallinikos, the anonymous *Vita of Daniel the Stylite*, the anonymous *Vita of Isaac and Dalmatos*, and the anonymous *Vita of Olympias*) may be described as predominantly Constantinopolitan, but in none of them does the capital hold such an exclusive position as in the *Miracles of Artemios*, and in none of them do the *dramatis personae* belong to such a "demotic" milieu.

The central figure of the *Miracles* is Artemios, who had been *dux*, i.e. governor (of Egypt), but allegedly became a victim of the Arian persecutions. Artemios is a historical personage: he served as *dux* of Egypt under the emperor Constantius and in 362 was executed by Julian the Apostate. In historical reality he was not a victim of the Arians. On the contrary, he supported George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, against the Orthodox Athanasios.<sup>29</sup> The *vita* of another great Orthodox saint, Pachomios, contains an episode mentioning Artemios, *stratelates* or *dux* of Alexandria under Constantius, who was sent to search for Athanasios and came to Tabennesi, where he pitched his camp on the land of Pachomios' monastery; for his arrogance he was punished by the heavenly power: his nose began to bleed.<sup>30</sup> In a strange transformation, the former Arian and persecutor of the Orthodox was transformed into a saint, healer and hero of Constantinople. The cult of Artemios was established there by the mid-seventh century, and the miracle-working casket of the saint was positioned in the church of John the Baptist. The *Vita of Artemios*, however, seems to have been written later than the *Diegesis*: the text now available is attributed to the famous John of Damascus or an unknown John of Rhodes.<sup>31</sup> However, these attributions are impossible to prove. Also, it cannot be definitely shown that the *vita*

<sup>28</sup> V. DÉROCHE, *Pourquoi écrivait-on des recueils de miracles?*, in C. JOLIVET LÉVY-M. KAPLAN -J.-P. SODINI (eds.), *Les saints et leur sanctuaire à Byzance*, Paris 1993 [Byzantina Sorbonensia 11], 100.

<sup>29</sup> PLURE 1, 1971, 112.

<sup>30</sup> F. HALKIN, *Sancti Pachomii vitae graecae*, Brussels 1932 [SHag 19], 86f., cf. ID., *Le corpus athénien de saint Pachôme*, Geneva 1982, 65f.

<sup>31</sup> KOTTER, *Schriften* V, 183-245.

abstracted its information on Artemios from the Arian historian Philostorgios (d. 439). The extant *vitae* mention Justinian I and the erection of Hagia Sophia of which Philostorgios could not have known.

The genre of hagiographical biography was created by Athanasios of Alexandria whose *Vita of Antony the Great* became a paragon for later hagiographers. It begins with Antony's birth and ends with his physical death. The body of the work contains Antony's indoctrination, struggles against the Devil and for Orthodoxy, and miracles which he performed by prayer. The life of the hero is placed within a strict chronological framework with clearly defined termini.

The author of the *Diegesis* does not follow the Athanasian model of chronological narrative. The saint's miracles are treated separately from his life and struggle. His martyrdom is mentioned only in passing, and the power of evil is almost completely ignored; though demons play practical jokes (one of them made a priest forget about Artemios' gift of healing, and another caused damage to a ship), they are not rivals to the saint, and Artemios easily turns them to flight.

The subgenre of miracles was not the invention of this anonymous hagiographer of the second half of the seventh century. Pseudo-Basil of Seleukeia wrote the *Miracles of Thekla* (as well as an iambic treatment of the same subject which is lost) in the fifth century. Also in the fifth century, it seems, a Christodoros of Thebes the Illustis wrote a *Miracles of Kosmas and Damianos*, possibly in hexameters, which is lost as well. The anonymous *Miracles of Kosmas and Damianos* was a work of the sixth century. In the seventh century John of Thessalonike produced the *Miracles of Demetrios*, Sophronios wrote the *Miracles of Kyros and John*, and the anonymous *Palestinian miracles of Anastasios the Persian* were compiled. The *Miracles of Artemios*, however, differs substantially from its predecessors, most of all with regard to its narrative style.

The above collections of miracles have, to a greater or lesser extent, strict organization of material, subjected to certain principles of space and time and self-contained within a formal stylistic frame. The *Palestinian miracles* of Anastasios<sup>32</sup> is the most rigid example of such "organized" composition. It is a narration of the journey of the saint's relics, developed in strict accordance with chronology and space. The author of the *Miracles of Thekla*<sup>33</sup> states in the preface that one of his goals is to prove the superiority of Christian miracle-working to pagan divinations, and he reserves the physical end of the heroine as the logical termination point. The *Miracles of Kosmas and Damianos*<sup>34</sup> has an epilogue summarizing the achievements of the *anargyroi* who have lived and cured people in the area of Nikomedeia. The work of Sophronios<sup>35</sup> (a supplement to his *Enkomion* of

<sup>32</sup> B. FLUSIN, *Saint Anastase le Perse* 1, Paris 1992, 116-153.

<sup>33</sup> G. DAGRON, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle*, Brussels 1978 [SHag 62], 284-412.

<sup>34</sup> L. DEUBNER, *Kosmas und Damian*, Leipzig, Berlin 1907; E. RUPPRECHT, *Cosmae et Damiani sanctorum medicorum vita et miracula*, Berlin 1935.

<sup>35</sup> PG 87/3, 3423-3690.

the two saints?) also has an epilogue devoted to the pious activity of the emperor Theodosios I and the patriarchs of Alexandria Theophilos and Cyril. Finally, in the prologue to the *Miracles of Demetrios*, John blandly states that his hero was connected with "the whole of Macedonia and the royal *polis*" and in the epilogue announces that he has completed the pious journey (meaning the story-telling),<sup>36</sup> thus stressing the unity of his text (at least in his own perception).

Unlike these collections, the *Diegesis of Artemios* seems to have no compositional unity, to be stitched together, that is, in the manner of an anthology.<sup>37</sup> The author begins by stating that he is like someone who has walked into a garden and has taken pleasure in gazing at all the different trees and flowers which are worthy of praise and then goes elsewhere and desires to report to his neighbors what he has seen, but does not retain the memory of every detail; therefore, he has no other choice but to recollect what he remembers (τῷ λογισμῷ συναθροῖσαι) and to set forth everything τύχῃ, randomly. He therefore does not set a goal for his narration and he does not define any common denominators therein. The episodes are purportedly selected by accident, by the play of his memory as far as his limited powers allow. The *Miracles of Artemios* consists of forty-five units that have neither chronological sequence (the time of the emperor Herakleios can be mentioned both before the reign of the emperor Maurice and again after that of Maurice, and a certain George appears as deacon after he was said to have been ordained priest) nor any logical structure. Although lacking chronological and logical sequence, the episodes do have, in some cases, specious links between them, such as those beginning with ἄλλος or ἕτερος, or saying that the man "suffered from the same ailment", or that the boy "was sick in the same manner". Three episodes deal with the same man, George, who suffered from various diseases.

Each episode of the *Miracles*, with only minor exceptions, includes the same elements: a man (name, age and profession are often indicated), originating from such and such place, had an affliction of the testicles (hernia?); he heard about the healing power of Artemios, went to the church of John the Baptist where the casket of the martyr was located, had a vision of Artemios, and was healed. The genital diseases of women are also mentioned (p. 34.20-26, p. 25.16) with one girl breaking the narrative pattern with a hernia complaint, καταβαρής (p. 33.18). The hagiographer says that in the case of women, the

<sup>36</sup> P. LEMERLE, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de saint Démétrius*, vol. I, Paris 1979, 50-165. P. SPECK, *De miraculis s. Demetrii, qui Thessalonicam profugus venit*, *Varia IV*, Bonn 1993 [Poikila byzantina 12], denies the stylistic unity of John's *Miracles* and considers them as a more or less chaotic collection of independent tales gathered together much later than usually suggested. Such critical views, however ingenious, are difficult to prove.

<sup>37</sup> L. RYDÉN, *Byzantine Hagiography in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries: Literary Aspects*, *Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala, Årsbok 1986*, 74, considers the lack of "tightly knit composition" a typical feature of Byzantine hagiography; "the hagiographer," says RYDÉN, "piles episode upon episode within a frame consisting of a few fixed points."

martyr refers the case to Saint Febronia who was also venerated in the church of John the Baptist (p. 74.28-30). The monotony of the plots is underlined by the monotony of the vocabulary: such words as δίδυμοι (testicles), καταβαρής (hernia complaint), προσκατεγέω (to hold a vigil in the sanctuary [incubation]), στρωμνή (mattress), ἐμπλαστρον (plaster) recur in divers tales. Any episode could easily be subtracted from the *Miracles* without spoiling the composition of the whole, and it is easy to imagine dozens of similar episodes inserted or added at the end. There is no conclusion and there is no attempt to summarize the deeds of the martyr, even though in several parts of the *Diegesis* the author interrupts his narrative and, in an apostrophe, reminds the Jews of the healing power of Christ and his faithful follower. We may call the tale of Artemios' healings a "motionless structure" (to use Thomas Hardy's words about Egdon Heath).

But this immobility of composition is deceptive or, rather, a literary pose. In order to see through this superficial impression we shall start with simple arithmetic. The tales of the *Miracles* may be divided into three parts<sup>38</sup>, the average length of the unit in each part being:

miracles 1-16	24 lines;
miracles 17-41	61 lines;
miracles 42-45	33 lines.

Thus the composition is not "motionless": having started with short units, the anonymous hagiographer drastically increases the size of the units in the middle, then reduces them again at the end of his work. The apex of the middle part is prepared for by the elementary units of the initial section and gradually smoothed down in the concluding parts. The complexity of a unit in the middle section may be created by "theoretical deviations", such as a digression to praise Artemios or to attack the Arians who were unable to construe the nature of the Trinity, but it is usually reached through introducing additional personages. In the early episodes, the suffering character interacts only with the saint. But in miracle 17 we meet, besides the ailing man, his relative, the *patrikios* Sergios, who cares for the sick man, and an actor from Alexandria who accompanied the hernia patient to the sanctuary. By increasing the number of participants the author allows the plot to become more complicated. In this episode the actor behaves impudently in the sanctuary and therefore suffers a hernia himself in the shrine of healing, while the original patient is cured. Sergios, who initiated the process of healing, appears again at the end of the tale when the actor shows him his newly acquired tumor. Another way the author can vary the episodes is to include compound details. Thus miracle 32 is the story of a certain Menas who originated from Alexandria but lived in Constantinople and worked for a wine

<sup>38</sup> J. HALDON, in a Supplementary Essay to the translation of CRISAFULLI-NESBITT, 34 f., draws the borderline between miracles 31 and 32 and considers the two parts of the *Diegesis* as depending on two sources, the second part having been added in the seventh century to an earlier collection. There is little hope of proving such a hypothesis and until it is proven we had better abstain from vivisection of a text that is stylistically uniform and, in a sense, unique.

merchant. One day the ship he was unloading began to break up, and Menas, wishing to save the wine vessel, tried to hold together the severed halves, but he was struck in the belly and fell into the water. We are then given a detailed account of how a friend convinced Menas to look for Artemios' help, how he rejected a doctor who had already spent a coin in the market buying medication, how Menas was brought in a boat to the sanctuary, and so on.

In a few cases the writer diverges from the general theme of the *Diegesis*, the treatment of hernias. Thus in miracle 19 we read about the *chartoularios* George, who became lame after having fallen "from a height in his house"; he was cured after stumbling in the church of Artemios and falling on the coffin of the saint. At a push, one may justify the inclusion of this "non-herniary" story on the grounds that the neat story, miracle 20, which is devoted to the same George, does deal with the main topic of hernia. Miracle 18, however deviates completely from the main stream: here Artemios comes forth to reveal the name of a burglar. Since the episodes are short and to some extent standardized, they leave little space for the development of characters: people's emotions are mostly limited to suffering from pain and expectation of being healed. But some nuances of character can be noticed: a mother who pitied her sick boy, another mother who worked so hard that she was unable to bring her ailing son to the sanctuary, an actor who impudently laughed in a shrine, an angry smith, a helper of a wine-merchant who risked his life to save the wine cask from a sinking boat. Not only the emotions and intentions of people are depicted but in some cases their physical deportment, their gestures: as the *hegoumenos* John commanded his sick servant Andrew to be brought to Artemios' sanctuary, the sufferer just pressed his lips (lit. "joined a lip to a lip"), closed his eyes, shook his head and remained silent.

The monotony of the narrative is also relieved by the saint's transformations: Artemios works miracles mostly by appearing in night visions, but he has no established shape and takes the forms of various persons: the arch-physician Anthimos, a Persian medical doctor, a butcher armed with butcher's tools, a friend of the mother of a sick boy, a courtier who becomes cross with the dreaming woman who is slow to provide him with towels, a senator who is a friend of the master of the sick man. And the healing itself, endowed with similar features, opens possibilities for a variety of details.

Artemios' healings were performed by incubation: the saint appears in a vision to the patient or somebody related to him, mostly when the person in search of a cure sleeps in the holy precinct (in the church of John the Baptist), but sometimes outside it. Incubation was an old pagan practice, adopted by the Christian Church (in the sixth century?) and used by such saintly pairs as Kosmas and Damianos, and Kyros and John.<sup>39</sup> There is, however, a substantial difference between incubation as performed by his predecessors and the healing mechanisms applied by Artemios. Other saints, while appearing in a vision,

<sup>39</sup> N. FERNANDEZ MARCOS, *Los Thaumata de Sofronio: Contribución al estudio de la incubación cristiana*, Madrid 1975; J.-M. SANSTERRE, *Apparitions et miracles à Menouthis: de l'incubation païenne à l'incubation chrétienne*, *Apparitions et miracles*, Brussels 1991, 69-83.

either used recommendations (change of behavior, diet, semi-medical remedies), touched lightly the sick person's head, mouth or nostril or directed him to a cold bath; the measures applied by Artemios are less "scientific" but much more "naturalistic". This is so because of the very nature of the disease specialized in by Artemios —hernia, the ailment of the pudenda (sometimes the Greek equivalent αἰδοῖα is used side by side with "testicles"). In several episodes the hagiographer emphasizes that the sick man suffered from shame and hesitated to show his "indecent" organs. The treatment consists primarily of squeezing the swollen testicles or kicking the testicles so that the patient shrieked with pain; alternatively the saint cut the tumor with a knife (or sword?) covering the sick man with blood and pus and filling the sanctuary with a stench. On one occasion the rupture can be described as hanging below the knees and the length and width are given exact measurements (p. 28.19-23). The naturalism of the operation is reinforced by "dirty" details: thus the actor, who accompanied his herniated friend to the sanctuary and stayed there overnight, was unable to leave the pitch-dark shrine, which had been locked for the night, and urinated inside (for this impudence he was immediately punished); or, on another occasion the patient conversed with the disguised martyr in an unlit latrine. The paradoxical contrast between the nether parts and the sublimity of the martyr is strikingly represented in miracle 26, which is unique in its composition. Here Artemios does not work the miracle himself but sends the sick man to a smith, Theodore by name, who had his shop in the porticoes of Domninos. The man visited the smith, but Theodore refused to fulfill the request saying that he knew nothing about healing; again the vision is repeated and again the visit to the smith results only in irritating the prospective healer. The game continues and finally the angry smith orders the patient to put his tumor on the anvil, strikes it with his sledgehammer, and, lo and behold, the inflammation is gone. We may wonder whether this parallel with the comic myth of the smith Hephaistos urged by Zeus to relieve his headache by striking his head with an ax and thus provoking the birth of Athena, was intentional, and whether the author intended in this episode a silent parody —not a mimesis!— of the ancient cultural heritage.

The stories are usually told in the third person by the hagiographer, who claims to have witnessed the events or to have obtained the information first-hand. Miracle 21 is exceptional: the story is narrated in the first person by the deacon Stephen, who was cured by the martyr. When a "character" in the narration (not the author in an apostrophe) makes mention of Artemios, it is commonly in the form of advice to the effect that the sick man should visit the saint's sanctuary. Rumors of Artemios' medical successes seem to be ubiquitous.

The heroes of these miraculous tales live in a world regulated by collective norms and perceptions.<sup>40</sup> The cult of the martyr's casket is one of these collective perceptions, and the veneration of icons parallels it. Icons are everywhere —in churches and private houses,

<sup>40</sup> DÉROCHE (Pourquoi écrivait-on [as above, n. 2], 116) thinks that the main idea of the *diegesis* was the role of the saint as a mediator between God and mankind; truly, this must be a "collective"

there are icons of Christ, John the Baptist, angels, Artemios; an icon (or a series of icons?—the term is ἱστορία τῆς ἀθλήσεως) in the church of the Baptist illustrates the martyrdom of the thaumaturge Artemios. Icons formed a house treasure preserved for pious purposes, but the value of their material form could be converted into cash in an emergency: when a poor woman named Sophia was unable to pay the doctor's fee, she complained that she did not own a golden icon or silver utensils that could be readily sold for cash. On the other hand, the written word does not attract the hagiographer's attention, and there seem to be only two "literary" hints in an episode where mention is made of a man who sang poems (στίχῃ) of "the humble Romanos [the Melode]"; here the "literature" is of an oral rather than a written tradition. There is also mention of a poet of the Blue faction. The hagiographer knows the names of Hippocrates and Galen and asks the rhetorical question, "What ancient (writer) relates that hernias are cured with a butcher's tools?" (p. 36 l. 22-23).

Into this world of collective piety and common values and hatreds (Jews, physicians, Arians, money-lenders, actors, races, games, even noisy laughter are deprecated in accordance with the traditional and conventional wisdom) the anonymous hagiographer brings some individual traits, including, on occasions, sharp attention to detail and the paradoxical that verges on parody.

We are well aware that the Byzantines used various "styles" for their works;<sup>41</sup> certainly, it is impossible to draw clear borderlines between these styles, the more so because some authors worked in different styles, whether plain or more pompous. The case of the *Miracles of Artemios* seems to be relatively simple: its style (or language) is plain, the syntax clear, rhetorical figures extremely rare, and the "demotic vocabulary" abundant.<sup>42</sup> Vernacular words are used for diseases, meals, garments, vessels, professions and offices. But this simplicity of wording is by no means a sign of poverty of language. It is style in a more general sense of the word, the manner of self-expression. When the anonymous hagiographer wanted (or needed) he could put aside the "natural" language of conversation and assume a higher level of rhetorical speech. Miracle 34 concludes: "After they heard this (sc. the account of the girl's healing) and were accurately informed, they began to glorify God Who accomplishes marvels through His holy martyr and Who freely restored alive to her parents the nearly dead girl. Behold the miracles, you who are fond of hearing; with how many garlands does Christ crown (πόσοις στεφάνοις στεφανοῖ) those who have suffered martyrdom on His account, with how many honors does He embellish Artemios His servant to the extent that He turns graves into treasure-troves for him" (tr. Crisafulli-Nesbitt, 181-183). The hagiographer uses, in this sumptuous sentence, both an

idea behind any hagiographical text: the saint is, by definition, a mediator "entre Dieu et les hommes". Cf. P. SPECK, *Wunderheilige und Bilder*, *Varia* 3, Bonn 1991 [Poikila Byzantina 11], 210-235.

<sup>41</sup> We shall analyse the Byzantine idea of style below, p. 161-165.

<sup>42</sup> See J. GROSIDIER DE MATONS, *Les Miracula S. Artemii*: Note sur quelques questions de vocabulaire, *Mémorial A.-J. Festugière*, Geneva 1984, 263-266.

anaphora and a tautology. Further on, in the same concluding passage, we find rhetorical questions, the figures of geminatio, of paronomasia, of anaphora, and even assonance (ἀντὶ γὰρ ναμάτων βρούει ἰάματα, ἀντὶ ὑδάτων λυμνάζει θαύματα). In miracle 33 we find anaphora combined with oxymoron: "There his living corpse is hoarded, there is the grace of healings, there is laid the treatment of the sick." The author demonstrates that he is able to attain a "higher" style of rhetoric, especially in his apostrophes or perorations; but in the narrative of the tales about the common citizens of Constantinople he wishes to retain the simple language of the people which is both naturalistic and rough-hewn. The *Miracles of Artemios*, unique in its composition, is also unique in its manner of presentation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ANDREW, METROPOLITAN OF CRETE

#### *A. Biography (BHG 113)*

Ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Analekta* V, 169-179, 422-224

Andrew's life<sup>1</sup> is described in a *vita* by the *patrikios* and *quaestor* Niketas<sup>2</sup> that survives in two manuscripts, the oldest of which (cod. Vatop. 79) is of the tenth or eleventh century. Several writers of the tenth century named Niketas held high ranks in the imperial hierarchy—one Niketas compiled the *Vita of Theoktiste of Lesbos*—but we do not have sufficient evidence to identify them. Th. Detorakes hypothesized that the author of the *Vita of Andrew* was a contemporary of Photios;<sup>3</sup> L. G. Westerink thinks he may have lived earlier, i.e. in the eighth century.<sup>4</sup> Neither of these views can be proven. Several hagiographical texts were written on the basis of Niketas' biography,<sup>5</sup> but they have no significant independent information.

It is difficult to judge to what extent Niketas' biography is trustworthy. S. Šestakov emphasized that the chronological and topographical information contained in this *vita*

<sup>1</sup> M.-F. AUZÉPY, La carrière d'André de Crète, *BZ* 88, 1995, 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> BHG 113, ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Analekta* V, 169-179, 422-424.

<sup>3</sup> Th. DETORAKES, *Oi áγιοι τῆς πρώτης βυζαντινῆς περιόδου τῆς Κρήτης*, Athens 1970, 161.

<sup>4</sup> L. G. WESTERINK in *Nicetas Magistros, Lettres d'un exilé*, Paris 1973, 45f. AUZÉPY also assumes that the text was produced during the reign of Constantine V. More critical is ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 40 n. 1056.

<sup>5</sup> V. LATYŠEV, *Menologii anonymi byzantini saeculi X, quae supersunt (e codice Hierosolymitano S. Sepulchri 17)* 2, St. Petersburg 1912, 136f.; Th. DETORAKES, Ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἀνδρέαν Κρήτης, *EEBS* 37, 1969/70, 85-94; B. LAOURDAS, Μακαρίου τοῦ Μακρῆ, Βίος τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀνδρέου, ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κρήτης, Ἱεροσολυμίτου, *KretChron* 7, 1953, 63-74; D. G. TSAMES, Ἰωσήφ Καλοθέτου· Συγγράμματα, Thessalonike 1980 [Thessalonikeis Byzantinoi Syggrafeis 1], 435-451.



was accurate;<sup>6</sup> the fact of the matter is, however, that Niketas names only two localities: the stronghold *tou Drimeos* on Crete and the *topos* Erissos/Eressos on Lesbos, and we have no other data to test his statements; as for his chronology, it is sometimes questionable. On the other hand, Niketas is a sober narrator. Thus he avoids incredible miracles and concentrates on the political activity of his hero.

According to the *vita*, Andrew (like Romanos the Melode) originated from Syria. He was born in Damascus. The boy remained mute for the first seven years of his life; then after partaking of the Eucharist he suddenly acquired an articulate voice. He began an ecclesiastical career in Jerusalem under the "patriarch" (in fact *topoteretes*) Theodore (674-86) who rapidly promoted Andrew to the office of notary and eventually to that of assistant of the *oikonomos*. Niketas states clearly that Andrew represented Theodore at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople 680/81); this information, however, creates more difficulties than it solves, since the *topoteretes*' representative was named in the documents of the Council as George, priest and *apokrisiarios*, not Andrew. S. Vaill   decides to correct the hagiographer and to have Andrew's visit to Constantinople take place in 685<sup>7</sup> (the date accepted by Detorakes and Auz  py). He dwelt some time in the capital where he was appointed head of the *Orphanotropheion* and later administered the foundation (*gerokomeion*?) called *T   Eugeniou*.<sup>8</sup>

The peak of Andrew's career was his election to the post of archbishop of Crete.<sup>9</sup> It could not have occurred before 692, since both in 680 and 692 a certain Basil functioned as the archbishop of Gortyna, who was possibly followed by the "proedros of Crete", Stephen;<sup>10</sup> Detorakes places the end of Andrew's Constantinopolitan period at 711/2; this date is no more than a guess. In 711-13 Philippikos-Bardanes occupied the throne of Constantinople, and during his reign the old "heresy" of Monotheletism came again to the forefront, and, according to the evidence of Theophanes the Confessor, Andrew of Crete was among the leading "heretics". This evidence is supported by Andrew himself who, in the iambics addressed to Agathon, archdeacon and *chartophylax* of the Great Church, confesses that after having received a book by Agathon he rejected the "deception" (the

<sup>6</sup> S. ŠESTAKOV, rev. of PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS' edition, *Viz Vrem* 8, 1901, 173.

<sup>7</sup> S. VAIH  , Saint Andr   de Cr  te, *EO* 5, 1901/2, 381.

<sup>8</sup> On this institution (without reference to the *vita of Andrew*) see D. CONSTANTELOS, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare*, New Rochelle NY 1991, 171.

<sup>9</sup> After some oscillations V. LAURENT, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin* V/1, Paris 1981, no. 619, ascribed to him the seal of Andrew, "proedros of Crete". See also J. NESBITT-N. OIKONOMID  S, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks* 2, Washington DC 1994, 97f. no. 36.8.

<sup>10</sup> D. and L. STIERNON, *DHGE* 21, 806f. Stephen is known only from a seal daringly dated by G. ZACOS-A. VEGLERY, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, Basel 1972, no. 1294, to the beginning of the eighth century. We doubt that a seal of an unknown personage can be dated with such precision. The date, however, is accepted not only by the Stiernons but also P. GAUTIER in his review of Zacos-Vegler, *REB* 32, 1974, 407.

"heretical" Monotheletism, as opposed to the theology of two natures, two wills and two energies, is plainly named)<sup>11</sup> and reverted to Orthodoxy. Naturally, this "shameful" episode is omitted from the panegyric written by Niketas. Probably after this reconciliation with Orthodoxy, Andrew, in the oration *On the circumcision of the Lord*, asserts that the Lord has not only two natures but two wills and two energies as well (PG 97, 929CD). Less evocative is a passage in the homily *On the Transfiguration* where Andrew asks how one should treat a man "feeble in faith" and having a childish mind; should he be ignored? Not at all, is the answer—we must call him back to the "desired health" (CPG 8176; PG 97, 944AB). Certainly, this passage may be hinting at some other error of Andrew or even have a generic meaning without reference to his own biography.

The problem of Andrew's attitude toward Iconoclasm is more complicated.<sup>12</sup> Niketas, in Andrew's biography, neglects this topic, and only in the later *synaxarion* text do we read that Andrew returned to Constantinople in order to fight the heresy of the Iconoclasts.<sup>13</sup> In the same vein, a kontakion (*Menaia* of July 4) praises Andrew who expelled the wild beasts and heralded the veneration of sacred icons. It remains doubtful whether these late emendations to the saint's life are trustworthy.

There are no significant traces of the cult of icons in Andrew's own *  uvre*: as Laourdas demonstrated, the short treatise *On the veneration of the holy icons* ascribed to Andrew (CPG 8193; PG 97, 1301D-1304C) is not his work;<sup>14</sup> only in the above-quoted homily, *On the circumcision of the Lord*, does Andrew speak of Christ as represented and venerated in images and icons (  τυποις κα   ε  κον  σιμασιν). He speaks here of churches in which icons were destroyed, but he places these "destructions of icons" in the context of Arab raids (PG 97, 932A), not Iconoclastic persecutions.

Time and again Andrew uses the word ε  κ  ν not for a painted image but as a real identity: Christ, he says, regenerated human nature by assuming himself the human image and purifying it [CPG 817; PG 97, 877A]; "we, the faithful celebrate the regeneration of our image" [col. 885B]; he makes the Virgin declare her tomb to be not only the symbol of her buried corpse, but also the vivid image of humanity's rebirth [CPG 8181; PG 97, col. 1056D-1057A]. He employs the term "icon" metaphorically to designate Gethsemane in which "what has been told" meets what has really happened (col. 1064C). We find in his hymns the same metaphorical treatment of the term: in his *Requiem Kanon* (ode 4.142-43), he calls himself the icon of divine glory, and St. George is a living icon of temperance.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> A. HEISENBERG, Ein jambisches Gedicht des Andreas von Kreta, *BZ* 10, 1901, 508-512.

<sup>12</sup> See the discussion of the problem: B. LAOURDAS,   Ο   γιος   νδρ  ας      ν τ   Κρ  σει κα      Κρ  τη   π   Ε  κονομαχ  ας, *KretChron* 5, 1951, 44-49.

<sup>13</sup> LATYŠEV, *op. cit.*, 137.7-11.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. N. B. TOMADAKIS,   Η βυζαντιν     μνογραφ  α κα   πο  ησης 2, Athens 1965, 192. AUZ  PY (as above, n. 1) includes the fragment in the list of genuine works of Andrew.

<sup>15</sup> G. PAOLINI in E. FOLLIERI, *Uno Theotokarion Marciano del sec. XIV*, Rome 1961, 231-261: Ode IX, 2.552-553.

Certainly, this is not proof of Andrew's Iconoclastic sympathies, but we cannot exclude the possibility of his joining the ranks of Leo III's supporters. Earlier he had shown that he was willing to be "politically correct" in the issue of the moment by accepting and then rejecting Monotheletism. Could Andrew have been swayed again in his thinking, when Leo III started questioning the validity of the cult of painted images? Could his two sermons *On the Exaltation of the Holy Cross* (CPG 8179-8180) have been read in the presence of this emperor? These sermons exalt not only the metaphysical role of the Cross as the "ladder leading to heaven" (col. 1021A) but also its military function, the theme so dear to the Iconoclasts: the Cross is the victorious tool of generals, the guardian of cities, the adversary of the enemy, the stake for impaling barbarians (col. 1021B-C; cf. col. 1045A). The barbarian turns his back and the Scythian flees before the Cross, even though nobody pursues him (col. 1033C). Andrew never juxtaposes the Cross and the icon, as Iconodules would be inclined to do, but he opposes the Cross to idols, which it destroys (col. 1028A-B), and to the bronze serpent made by Moses (col. 1044C-D).

Niketas says that Andrew died on his way from Constantinople on the island of Lesbos. We do not know when this happened. The traditional date, 740, is only a plausible hypothesis. Numerous works survive under the name of Andrew, primarily homilies and hymns;<sup>16</sup> not all of them are published and, to complicate matters, the authorship of many is questionable. Thus the *Vita of the apostle James, the brother of the Lord*, attributed in some manuscripts to Andrew of Crete, is published by Noret as a work of pseudo-Andrew.<sup>17</sup> Deubner, using two manuscripts (Laur. plut. 9:14 and Messan. 29), produced the edition of the *Enkomion of the Miracles of St. Therapon*, as an anonymous work.<sup>18</sup> Auzépy, however, referring to cod. Monac. 366 of the late ninth century, considers Andrew to be the writer of the *Enkomion*.<sup>19</sup> The text must be later than the conquest of Cyprus by Muawia in 649 that preceded the transfer of Therapon's relics to Constantinople. How much later is difficult to establish. The hagiographer entreates Therapon to protect "us" (Constanti-

<sup>16</sup> The list of works in CPG 8170-8228; of hymns in FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 253f., cf. SZÖVÉRFY, *Hymnography* 2, 7-10.

<sup>17</sup> *Un éloge de Jacques, le frère du Seigneur*, Toronto 1978. Not of Andrew is the homily *On the silence of Zacharias* ascribed to him in a later manuscript: M. DONINI, *Andrae Cretensis vulgo adscripta homilia, Augustinianum* 15, 1975, 201-211. A complex case is that of the manuscript in Halle containing several genuine homilies and a series of the works by Chrysostom falsely ascribed to Andrew; cf. J. N. BIRDSALL, *Homilies Ascribed to Andreas Cretensis in MS. Halensis A 119*, in J. IRMSCHER-F. PASCHKE-K. TREU (eds.), *Texte und Textkritik*, Berlin 1987 [TU 133], 49-51. There are also problems associated with the attribution to Andrew of a number of hymns.

<sup>18</sup> BHG 1798 (CPG 8196): L. DEUBNER, *De incubatione capita quattuor*, Leipzig 1900, 113-134. Also H. DELEHAYE, *Saints de Chypre*, AB 26, 1907, 247 and ID., *Les recueils antiques de miracles des saints*, AB 43, 1925, 38f., does not mention the author of the legend. Deubner dated the text to the early seventh century, at the time of the Avaro-Persian attack of 626, but Delehayé had already questioned the basis of such a precise dating.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* I, 622 no. 36.

nople) from an impending threat and to subdue the arrogance (we read φρονήματα instead of ms. φράγματα, "defence") of the barbarians (*Mir.* 10.12-13: Deubner, p. 125), and adds: "Have mercy on the Christians oppressed by the ἔθνη from all quarters... Save the polis in which you dwell." If the author is indeed Andrew, he was too young to witness the Arab siege of 674-78, and Auzépy rejects the date of 717-18 assuming that Andrew had to have written the *Enkomion* before the reign of Leo III, some time between 695 and 711, even though Constantinople was not besieged by the Arabs or any other "barbarian" during that period. She interprets the crucial phrase as sheer rhetoric. On the other hand, the author describes the attackers as "barbarians" not Arabs whom he, on a different occasion, calls disparagingly "the crawling fetus of Hagar" (*Mir.* 7.1: Deubner, p. 123), but he could use different ethnonyms to characterize the same enemy. Thus the problem of the authorship and date still needs clarification.

It is usually impossible to establish when and where a particular work of Andrew was compiled; one of the fortunate exceptions is his *Enkomion of the ten Cretan martyrs*<sup>20</sup> delivered in Crete and mentioning, at the end, the Arab menace; also, the *Homilies of St. Patapios*, written after Andrew had become archbishop of Crete (see below). More problematic is his *Kanon on St. George*: here the poet celebrates the end of a tempest and the restoration of peace (ode 4.260-264) that saved "this mandra" (cf. ode 5.316-318) or monastery (ode 3.197-198). Could this be taken to imply that he stayed for a while in a monastery? And if so, when and where? We have no answers to the questions.

The *Megas Kanon* seems to have been written in Constantinople: concluding ode 9, the poet addresses the Mother of God as protectress "of thy polis"; moreover, he mentions the victory (at Constantinople) over enemies who turned to flight and were routed. If we assume that this *theotokion* alludes to the defeat of an Arabs siege of Constantinople, two occasions may be meant: the Arab retreat in 678 or Leo III's victory in 718. The first case is less probable (see above). If he was speaking about the victory of 718 (as in the *Enkomion of Therapon*?), Andrew's attitude toward the government of Leo III was friendly, at least at the beginning of the new reign, when Leo III had not yet professed Iconoclasm.

<sup>20</sup> B. LAOURDAS, Ἀνδρέου, ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κρήτης τοῦ Ἱεροσολυμίτου, ἐγκώμιον εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους δέκα καὶ καλλινίκους μάρτυρας, *KretChron* 3, 1949, 85-197.



*B. Transfiguration of Christ: A "new" homily (BHG 1996, CPG 8176)*

Ed. PG 97, 932-957

The theme of the Transfiguration is one of the favorite subjects of Greek patristic homilies.<sup>21</sup> M. Sachot considers the homily by John Chrysostom the most ancient of them; he emphasizes that Chrysostom's homily (as well as that of Cyril of Alexandria) differs substantially from the later texts. Indeed, the homily of Andrew<sup>22</sup> is a far different thing from Chrysostom's, the ancient work being not a festive celebration but a sort of "Aristotelian" commentary on each phrase of Matthew's narration (*Matth.* 17.1-8):<sup>23</sup> "Wherefore doth Christ not lead the apostles up straightaway?" asks John, and continues in the same manner, indicating in some cases one, in other cases as many as five "reasons"; the end of the homily consists of social and political lessons typical of Chrysostom.

Some homilies on the Transfiguration belong chronologically between Chrysostom and Andrew. Among them are two texts of the late sixth and seventh centuries; one attributed to Chrysostom but produced, according to Sachot, by Leontios of Constantinople,<sup>24</sup> and another by Anastasios of Sinai.<sup>25</sup> Anastasios' homily—festal, unlike that of Chrysostom—stresses several important items: the corporeal reality of the place (Anastasios begins with the phrase of *Gen.* 28.17 "How fearsome is this place," and repeats it no less than three more times, and he draws an "ideological" parallel between the rock of Thabor and that of Sinai where he dwells) and of people's behavior (Peter's rejoicing is depicted in detail), the realization of biblical predictions, and the eminence of the event, the theme of Christ's grandeur having played an even larger role in Chrysostom's exegesis. The reality of place was irrelevant for Leontios, but he also depicts "the immeasurable zeal" of Peter and puts specific emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ in glory that serves him as a pretext to refute the Arian heresy. In his homily Andrew emphasizes different points.

The core of the event, according to Andrew, is not the impending appearance of Christ in glory with the infinite host of angels, as is portrayed by Chrysostom and to some extent by Leontios, but God's self-deprivation, or "emptying" (κένωσις): Andrew begins

<sup>21</sup> G. HABRA, *La Transfiguration selon les pères grecs*, Paris 1973; M. SACHOT, *Les homélies grecques sur la Transfiguration*, Paris 1987; cf. J. A. MCGUCKIN, *The Patristic Exegesis of the Transfiguration*, *Studia Patristica* 28/1, 1985, 335-341.

<sup>22</sup> See, M. LEQUEUX, *Saint André de Crète. Septième discours*, *Contacts* 37, 1985, 39-55.

<sup>23</sup> PG 58, 549-558; Engl. tr. in *Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 10, Grand Rapids 1975, 345-351.

<sup>24</sup> M. SACHOT, *L'homélie pseudo-chrysostomienne sur la Transfiguration CPG 4724, BHG 1975*, Frankfurt/M-Bern 1975.

<sup>25</sup> A. GUILLOU, *Le monastère de la Théotokos au Sinai, Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 67, 1955, 230-258.

with the *kenosis* of the Logos and ends his discourse with the Logos "that emptied Himself and accepted the form of the other [i.e. man]". The appearance of Christ in glory is a graphic phenomenon, preceded by the overwhelming brilliance of the Transfiguration that must be concealed from mankind (it has a parallel in the imperial triumphal procession), whereas God's incarnation is a mystery beyond human understanding (see especially PG 97, 957A) and certainly beyond any graphic presentation. Andrew emphasizes not the brilliance of the Transfiguration but the mercy of the "divine dispensation" of salvation. Time and again, he stresses the impossibility of expressing the mystery, it being ἀνεκλάλητος, ἀνέκφραστος, ἄρρητος, ἀνέφικτος and so on. "We want now to express it in hymns (ἔξυμνεῖν) but cannot do so as it deserves" (col. 933C); none of the evangelists, asserts Andrew, described the ineffable "divine dispensation" of the incarnation of the Logos (col. 937B); even for the angels the mystery is unattainable (col. 933C); "we revere in silence what cannot be said and thought" (col. 952A), and so it goes on. We are incapable of seeing the mystery that surpasses the word and reason, but paradoxically we can participate in the mystery of the Transfiguration. "Let us go to the high mountain of the Transfiguration!" exclaims Andrew, and he expects that the miraculous and strange mystery will "be effective" (ἐνεργοῦσα) in us (col. 936D).

The difference between Chrysostom and Andrew is not only functional (festal homily vs. exegetic homily) but also systemic: for Chrysostom the Transfiguration is the sign of Christ's Second Coming, a graphic symbol of a graphic event; for Andrew the Transfiguration is a mystery of the divine self-deprivation, the symbol not of God's victory but of God's mercy. Accordingly, in each case the esthetic solution for the literary goal is different: instead of a clear composition with strictly defined parts (in Chrysostom) Andrew offers an undivided discourse with numerous repetitions; instead of clear moral precepts (in Chrysostom) Andrew in an abstract form advises his audience to forget all earthly matter ("let the dead bury their dead," he quotes *Matth.* 8.22) and hence disregards the earthly matter in his depiction. Concentrating on the mystery of the incarnation (as a reverted mystery of the Transfiguration), Andrew does not need any illusion of reality, and he discards all the signs of place, movement or emotions, so plentiful both in the text of the Gospel and in Chrysostom. If the apostles move in his homily, it is only in citations from the Gospel incorporated in his discourse. Besides the direct quotation from Matthew, Peter appears only at the very end of the homily, and even though Andrew says in passing that the apostle was elated and delighted by the luminous vision, the author rushes to emphasize that he "was unable to speak", that he could not "explain in words" what he had experienced, that the events are ineffable and so on (col. 952AB). What matters for the writer is not the active rejoicing of Peter but the profound mystery of the event.

*C. The Virgin, the daughter of God (CPG 8170-8174, 8181-8183)*

Ed. PG 97, 806-914, 1045-1110, 1301-1330

It is well known that the theme of the Virgin, termed "daughter of God (θεόποις)" in a kanon,<sup>26</sup> occupied Andrew's special attention: of 21 homilies published in PG 97 eight are devoted to the Theotokos (two sermons *On the Presentation of Mary in the Temple*, ascribed in some manuscripts to Andrew, are, as B. Laourdas demonstrated, the works of George of Nikomedeia<sup>27</sup>). Andrew wrote kanons on the Virgin, while she holds place of honor in other works as well: thus in the *idiomela* on Christmas (Christ's Nativity)<sup>28</sup> he speaks more of the "Theotokos-Virgin", "the Mother of the Savior", than of Christ Himself. Andrew's concern with the cult of Mary is far from being exceptional in his days: as Av. Cameron has demonstrated, veneration of the Theotokos intensified in the Empire in the late sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>29</sup> According to M. Jugie, until the time of Justinian I only one Marian feast had been celebrated, and numerous homilies from the fifth century on attached this celebration primarily to Christ's Nativity itself; it was the emperor Maurice (582-602) who introduced the feast of the Dormition, and Jugie considers this to have been the result of an initiative on the part of the Monophysites of Egypt and Syria;<sup>30</sup> the Monophysites' opposition to Nestorianism and to its critical attitude toward the role of Mary makes Jugie's supposition plausible, and it is plausible to hypothesize that Andrew's sympathies with the Monothelites contributed to his interest in the theme. At any rate, it was Andrew who initiated the specific topics of the Annunciation and Dormition in the genre of Byzantine Marian homilies.<sup>31</sup>

As in the sermon *On the Transfiguration*, in Andrew's homilies *On the Virgin* the focus is not on "historicity" or "actuality," or on the depicting events and "existents" (characters, setting etc.) connected with Mary's nativity or the tidings brought her by Gabriel, but on

<sup>26</sup> PG 97, 1308C. We follow the interpretation of M. JUGIE, Saint André de Crète et l'immaculée conception, *EO* 13, 1910, 130; LAMPE, s.v. renders it differently: who bears a divine Son.

<sup>27</sup> B. LAOURDAS, Ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Εἰσοδίων τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ Ἀνδρέας ὁ Κρήτης, *Orthodoxia* 25, 1950, 122f.

<sup>28</sup> CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm*, 97f.

<sup>29</sup> Av. CAMERON, The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople, *JThSt* 29, 1978, repr. in EAD., *Continuity and Change in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, London 1981, pt. XVI, 79-108. The article was followed by several other works.

<sup>30</sup> JUGIE, *Mort et Assomption*, 173-183. On the Marian feast in Rome in the seventh century see: A. WENGER, *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle*, Paris 1955 [AOC 5], 141f.

<sup>31</sup> The standard homilies *On the Dormition* are attributed, respectively, to three orators of the eighth century: Andrew, Germanos and John of Damascus; see M. VAN ESBROECK, Étude comparée des notices byzantines et caucasiennes pour la fête de la Dormition, in ID., *Aux origines de la Dormition de la Vierge*, Aldershot 1995, pt. II, 2.

the mystery of her giving birth to God and of the divine dispensation of salvation: the Virgin rejected the law of nature to follow divine law. In accordance with this principle, there is neither concrete space nor concrete time in the first homily *On the Nativity*: Mary's activity is part and parcel (and at the same time a negation) of universal history that began with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, while the feast itself is conceived as the beginning, middle and end of time: the beginning as the fulfillment (περαίωσις) of the Law, the middle as reaching (συνάφεια) the peak, and the end as revealing the truth (PG 97, 805A). In the same manner, in the second homily *On the Nativity*, Andrew avoids the depiction of events and concentrates on a polemic against the Jews, the purpose of which is to show that the Old Testament prefigures the birth of Christ; only at the very end of this homily does the orator touch briefly upon Anna's barrenness and miraculous birth of her daughter (col. 841AC). The third homily *On the Nativity* again rejects "historicity", hardly mentioning Ioakeim and Anna; its aim is to prove the royal origin of Mary. No more factual are the homilies *On the Dormition*, where again the theme of the mystery of salvation prevails: the supernatural end of Mary leads to the regeneration of nature (col. 1093C, 1105C). At the same time, the orator frequently emphasizes the active participation of his audience in the joy of the festivities: his speech is not just a piece of entertainment, it is not just a *logos*; rather, it is a signpost on the way to salvation.

The unity of composition in these sermons is linked to the unity of theme: the discourses are not divided into clear sections, the presentation is repetitive (iterative), and the monotony of narration is "diluted" only by rhetorical questions and clauses of transition, such as "let us continue" (col. 833C). The characters are rarely delineated: in the first homily *On the Nativity*, Andrew says that Ioakeim was gentle and equitable and followed the laws of God, but he had no progeny. Anna's characterization is more dynamic: she was chaste but barren, fond of her husband but without child (col. 816B). "But (ἀλλά)" in both cases functions differently: in the case of Ioakeim the "but" is passive: he was a good man but his nature (φύσις) would not bestow a child on him. In the case of Anna, the "but" becomes emotional. Not her "nature", but she herself suffers from the misfortune, and Andrew delivers a fusillade of verbs to show her sufferings: Anna was vexed, grieved, depressed and unable to bear her childlessness, whereas Ioakeim's situation is defined by a "steady" formula: he shared her grief. Ordinary objects are rarely woven into the narrative, though an exception can be found in the third homily *On the Nativity*, where Andrew several times mentions Mary's swaddling clothes (σπάργανα): we venerate her swaddling clothes (col. 860BC), the prophet David foresaw her royal swaddling clothes (col. 861C), her royal swaddling clothes are a golden attire (col. 864A). The same image appears again in the third homily *On the Dormition* (col. 1097C). Why is the homilist so interested in the *spargana* of Mary? Were they a relic kept in the place where Andrew delivered his speech? Or were they just an image, a product of his imagination? Answers to these questions can only be conjecture. In the *First Homily on the Nativity* we find a more "naturalistic" detail: after having stated that Ioakeim and Anna had no children, Andrew moves on to a

description of the cure: God, he says, gave Ioakeim fruitfulness and Anna the capacity to bear children. Up to this point the statement is abstract, but Andrew continues: "God sprinkled the child-bearing organs, arid until this moment, with the sperm-producing moisture" and by so doing transformed them from barren into generative beings (col. 816C).

Proverbs, similes and metaphors are rare except for traditional epithets of the Virgin, and even rhetorical figures are not common, usually being limited to anaphoras, paronomasias, geminations and rhetorical questions. The striking exception is the traditional liking for accumulating epithets that form long lists (as for instance in the *Third Homily on the Dormition*, col. 1092CD), which serves to accentuate the general impression of compositional monotony. Andrew enjoys antitheses and paradoxes (Christ, he says, "is concealed while being revealed and revealed while concealed," col. 808A) and plays on words based on assonance. Some of his puns are successful, such as addressing Mary as ἐξ ἀγόνων λαγόνων βλαστάνουσα (col. 812B), "growing from a barren womb," or "an introduction to joy (χαρᾶς) and the termination of the curse (ἄρᾶς)" (col. 864B).

Compositional monotony becomes even stronger in Andrew's poetry. His *Kanon on the Nativity of the Virgin*<sup>32</sup> parallels the homilies for the same feast. It shows some similarity in approach, the same disregard for "historicity", the same collective involvement (συνεορτάσωμεν, col. 1316D) in celebration, the same fondness for paradox (oxymoron), such as the Virgin-Mother (col. 1320A), and for anaphora reinforced by assonance (τιμῶμεν τὴν ἁγίαν σου γέννησιν || τιμῶμεν καὶ τὴν ἄσπορον σύλληψιν σου, col. 1324AB). There is no essential movement in the kanon: the same words (ἄχραντος,<sup>33</sup> καρπός, ἀναρχος, κοιλία, and so on) are repeated in various combinations: the poet begins with the prophet David rejoicing over the scion who came forth from his kin, and ends with another reference to David alongside whom he now "is singing the daughter of the king." The kanon is not an exposition of events but a bit of "light revelry" on the occasion of the event.

#### D. The epic of repentance: *Megas Kanon*

Ed. PG 97, 1305-1386; *Τριώδιον κατανυκτικόν*, Athens 1960, 271-288

Andrew worked primarily in two genres: homily and kanon. A homily (sermon) is an ecclesial discourse that was commonly delivered in the context of a liturgical service; a kanon was a form of ecclesiastical poetry chanted during the *orthros* service and was

<sup>32</sup> On Andrew's poetical technique see G. SCHIRÒ, Caratteristiche dei canoni di Andrea Cretese, *KretChron* 15-16, 1961-1962, 113-139.

<sup>33</sup> It is noteworthy that the word ἄχραντος, "undefiled", is virtually unused in Andrew's Marian homilies.

adapted for musical performance.<sup>34</sup> It replaced the singing of biblical odes (at first fourteen odes, eventually reduced to nine). While the homily reached its peak already in the fourth to sixth centuries, the kanon was the creation of the late seventh or early eighth centuries when it supplanted the *kontakion*, a genre that received its most accomplished form in the poems of Romanos the Melode.<sup>35</sup> It is possible that Andrew was the inventor of this new form of ecclesial chant.

The kanon is often characterized as a poetic sermon. The themes and approaches of Andrew's homilies and kanons are similar: both are devoid of "historicity", and both are iterative, i.e. repeating the same words and groups of words; thus in the homily *On Raising Lazarus* (PG 97, 959-986), the clause "Lift up the stone" is repeated six times, and the clause "Come out" twelve, and in the kanon *On Raising Lazarus* (col. 1385-1398) "Thou hast raised the dead" is repeated five times in ode 6, and "Thou hast raised [the dead] by calling [him]" four times in odes 3 and 7. Even a rhythmic pattern cannot be considered as a particular mark of the kanon, since regular prose rhythm is part of the homilies. Thus the *Second Homily on the Dormition* begins: Μυστήριον ἡ παροῦσα πανήγυρις || ὑπόθεσιν ἔχουσα τῆς Θεοτόκου τὴν κοίμησιν || καὶ λόγων ὑπεραίρουσαν δύναμιν (Mysterious is this festivity, centered on the Dormition of the Mother of God and surpassing the capacity of words), and in the *chairetismos* of the homily *On the Annunciation* we read: Χαίροις ἱερότευκτον τοῦ βασιλέως παλάτιον, || χαίροις ἐκλεγομένη Θεῷ πρὸ γεννήσεων, || χαίροις, τὸ θεῖον πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διαλλακτήριον (Rejoice the hallowed palace of the King, rejoice the chosen by God before the Creation, rejoice the intermediary between the divine and the human). In this small example one can see that there is a predilection for clauses rounded out by key words of proparoxytone accent (stress dactyls) with paroxytone words interspersed. Phrasing can sometimes be unexpectedly non-rhetorical and conversational in cadence (even "modern"), as for example in the *Third Homily on the Dormition* (col. 1108C): καὶ δόρυ καὶ κρᾶνος καὶ τόξου βολὴς || ἀνήνυτα μένει καὶ ἄπρακτα (the spear and helmet and bow's arrow || useless remain and ineffective).<sup>36</sup>

The distinction between the homily and kanon (in Andrew's *œuvre*) is more noticeable on a linguistic than on a "literary" level: owing to its function as chant, the kanon is simpler in syntax and vocabulary. In the list of rare words used by Andrew<sup>37</sup> 302 words are gleaned from homilies, 16 from the *Megas Kanon*, and only 2 from kanons published in PG 97 (42 words are gathered in kanons ascribed to Andrew in AHG, whose authorship is not

<sup>34</sup> E. WELLESZ, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford 1961, 198-239. See below chapter 6.B.

<sup>35</sup> It does not mean, of course, that the *kontakion* completely disappeared from the church service; it continued to be performed occasionally; A. LINGAS, The Liturgical Place of the *Kontakion* in Constantinople, *Liturgija, arhitektura i iskusstvo vizantijskogo mira*, St. Petersburg 1995, 53f.

<sup>36</sup> Th. DETORAKES, Πρόδρομος μορφῆς νεοελληνικῆς στιχοποιίας σὲ βυζαντινοὺς ὕμνους, in N. PANAYOTAKES (ed.), *Origini della letteratura neogreca* 1, Venice 1993, 173, 177, 179, demonstrated that Andrew had used "modern" (iambic and trochaic) verse.

<sup>37</sup> Th. DETORAKES, Le vocabulaire d'André de Crète, *JÖB* 36, 1986, 46-56 (list 1).

always well established). The kanon has a stronger tendency to use the key words iteratively. Thus in the kanon *On Raising Lazarus*, Andrew uses the word νεκρός, "dead", no less than twenty times, φωνή, "voice", twenty-three, and the words to express "resurrection", [ἐξ]εγείρω and [ἐξ]ανίστημι, sixteen and twenty-four times respectively. In the homily *On Raising Lazarus*, despite being substantially longer, νεκρός and related verbs appear six times only, φωνή eleven, ἐγείρω twice, ἀνίστημι (with the meaning "to resurrect") eleven (twice it is used to describe movement, "to come"). There is, however, a single but important exception: the word θάνατος, "death", and related verbs are common in the sermon (at least 31 cases), whereas in the kanon they appear only six times. This exception underlines the functional difference of two genres: the kanon is more festive, stressing the moment of resurrection, while the homily is more "pensive", philosophical, dwelling on the phenomenon of death.

Due to its different function in the liturgy, the kanon is not a place for the abundant biblical quotations and rhetorical figures (including long anaphoras) typical of the homily, and its sentences are much simpler. The above-mentioned homily *On Lazarus* begins: "Lazarus convened this gathering, and it is meant to prepare the supper [in honor] of his return to life, [a supper] worthy of those who love the good and are fond of pageants; everything is already prepared, and everybody who in his passions follows and imitates the passions of Christ is invited to revel." Quite different is the exordium to the kanon *On Lazarus*: after the *heirmos*, Andrew immediately exclaims: "O my Savior, Thou hast raised Lazarus, dead of four days, with Thy mighty hand Thou hast annihilated the harm and shewn how powerful Thy authority is." This statement is devoid of metaphors and paronomasias and leads the listener directly into the core of the events. We might say that the kanon was written in the low style (i.e. grammatico-lexical pattern) whereas the homily is in a higher style.

What unites both genres (we speak here of two different literary genres and not of two parts of the church service) is their public or communal function: they were delivered in public, and Andrew seldom dares to voice his personal position, and when he does it is mostly to stress his incapacity to depict the event properly; the topic of both homilies and kanons is a feast celebrated by the speaker and his audience together, the spiritual banquet they enjoy in common, the mystery in which they participate. There were, however, some themes raised by Andrew that required or at least allowed a more personal attitude. Andrew understood the distinction between the public cult and private piety: at the end of the homily *On Lazarus*, he asks: "Where is the banquet? Where is Christ? Where is the remission of crimes offered?" And he answers: "In the church, in your store-room." And forthwith he retreats: "What am I saying 'In the church,' rather in your heart! There is Christ" (col. 984D-985A). These themes of private piety are first and foremost those of death and repentance. The homily entitled *On the Human Life and the Dead*<sup>38</sup> is, in fact,

<sup>38</sup> PG 97, 1267-1302; see the analysis by Th. NISSEN, *Diatriben und Consolation in einer christlichen Predigt des 8. Jh.*, *Philologos* 92, 1937, 177-198.

not a homily but a treatise (it is substantially longer: ca. 17 columns in the Migne edition, whereas the homilies *On the Dormition* are on average ca. 10 columns each), obviously influenced by cynic philosophy (Th. Nissen suggests that Andrew gleaned his knowledge from a florilegium similar to Stobaios IV, 34) or rather from the biblical book of *Ecclesiastes* whose famous sentence (1.2) "vanity, vanity, all is vanity" Andrew cites (col. 1297A) alongside other verses. The content of the treatise is banal, but unlike homilies the discourse is tightly structured: after the "cynic" preamble, pronouncing man to be "a cheap mixture on the border between life and death" (col. 1269A) and stressing the bestial nature of man, Andrew moves to Christian tenets: "We are not slaves but the sons of and heirs to God through Christ" (col. 1276A). The tone becomes optimistic: this great and harmonious universe is a work of God, and resurrection is the negation of death. An anaphora in the "cynic" preamble depicts man as an "ephemeral flower", as "faded grass"; even as a "fugitive slave"; in the "Christian" response Andrew creates a "muscular", energetic clause, consisting mostly of one-word kola: "How long [will last] groans, wailing, shrieks, hair torn off, striking hands, blows" and so forth, until Andrew calls the mourning blasphemous (col. 1281BC). We are mortal, but there is consolation. Again this passage is linked to and contrasted with the preamble: there man was described as losing paradise, here he overcomes hell with the help of the Lord. The climax of the treatise is "naturalistic": Are we afraid of the stench [of the dead]? We should not worry —it is ours not somebody else's (col. 1292A; the theme of the stench of the dead is touched upon also in the homily *On Lazarus*, col. 977C). And concluding, Andrew says: "You see how out of our ignominy grows the glory we have expected?" (He uses paronomasia, playing with the words ὀδοξία and δοξοῦσα) (col. 1296C); he returns to cynic terminology, but this time with biblical overtones (with numerous quotations from *Ecclesiastes*), and resumes: "Do not lament over the dead" (col. 1300B).

The discourse is in structured movement, from cynicism to Christianity. Instead of homiletic monotony, we see here a clear division into parts: preamble, midpoint and epilogue (the latter with elements of repetition). Strangely enough, it is the word "icon" that permeates the whole discourse and holds the construct lexically together: it is used no less than eleven times from the very beginning to the very end, and not a single time in the sense of "painted image". Does this perhaps indicate that Andrew was writing the treatise when the Iconoclastic dispute had already broken out and the terminology was in the air? This can only remain a matter for conjecture. The prose treatise *On the human life* has a matching poem that the editor called *Requiem Kanon*.<sup>39</sup> Just as the treatise is not a homily, so the *Requiem* is not a festal kanon: it forms a part of euchologia, and is accordingly more personal than chants on the days of the ecclesiastical calendar (unless this "individualism" is fictitious). The poet speaks of his sudden separation from his relatives and acquaintances (ode 1, 25-26), and he returns to "friends, acquaintances and relatives" many times (e.g. ode

<sup>39</sup> M. ARCO MAGRÌ, *L'inedito canon 'de requie' di Andrea Cretese*, *Helikon* 9-10, 1969/1970, 475-513. The text from p. 494 on.

7, 348; also twice "brothers"); especially evocative is the picture of friends who accompany the author to his grave and leave him —the abominated corpse (recalling the theme of the stench of the dead)— alone in the tomb (ode VI, 242-248). The "cynic" theme of the fading flower of youth and of the shortness of days is several times repeated in the *Requiem* side by side with the Christian treatment of death as repose and God as the creator of life.

The binary opposition of death to resurrection is ontological, both concepts belonging to existence as construed by the Byzantines; it has, in Andrew's *œuvre*, an ethical counterpart, the binary opposition of sin to repentance: sin is a moral death, and repentance a moral resurrection. The principle of public confession and repentance, common in the early Christian church, was declining and giving way to the monastic system of private penance and the spiritual guidance of a *pneumatikos pater* already from the end of the fourth century. However, the *Vita of Basil the Great*, falsely ascribed to Amphilochios but written most probably at the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century, shows that the idea of public atonement persisted until at least a couple of generations before Andrew.<sup>40</sup> It is within this transitional context the *Megas Kanon* of Andrew needs to be placed.<sup>41</sup>

Andrew's position in the *Megas Kanon* is ambiguous: the kanon was used for a public performance on the fifth Thursday in Lent (whether the day was fixed from the beginning or established later), but it was written as a personal atonement pronounced in the first person. This personal atonement, however, is generalized: unlike his iambic letter to Agathon confessing a concrete error, Andrew repents in the *Megas Kanon*, in a generic form, "the acts of his wretched life", his "evil acts", his "unclean acts". Andrew's vocabulary, however, allows us to penetrate beyond these generic statements: his errors or vices are connected primarily with the sphere of reason (λόγος): three times in ode 1 he upbraids his λογισμός, thoughts, characterized as "passionate"; he complains that his soul, like Eve, tasted forbidden (lit. "irrational", παράλογος) food, that he rejected the Savior's commandments (λόγια) giving life. If he thought that he had committed his "filthy" sins primarily against "reason" (not flesh), does it not signify that Andrew was still thinking about his involvement in the Monothelite "heresy"? He does allude to sins of the flesh: "I imitated Ruben... I committed an illegal intention against God, by befouling my bed, as Ruben befouled the bed of his father." It seems, however, more likely that in the *Megas Kanon* Andrew's personal sentiments (real or metaphorical) acquired an impersonal

<sup>40</sup> See R. BARRINGER, *The Pseudo-Amphilochian Life of St. Basil: Ecclesiastical Penance and Byzantine Hagiography*, *Theologia* 51, 1980, 57f.

<sup>41</sup> Much has been written on the *Megas Kanon*, see first of all P. K. CHRESTOU, *Ὁ Μέγας Κανὼν Ἀνδρέου τοῦ Κρήτης*, Thessalonike 1952; O. CLÉMENT, *Le chant des larmes*, Paris 1982; D. KRISOFF, *A View of Repentance in Monastic Liturgical Literature*, *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 28, 1984, 266-273; N. G. POLITES, *Ἐκστασις καὶ Ἀνάστασις κατὰ τὸν Μέγα Κανόνα*, *EEBS* 47, 1987-1989, 149-200.

significance applicable to each and every "sinner", so that his individual experience became a human or social construct.

Already in ode 1 Andrew introduces his main topic: repentance, μετάνοια. While the sinner finds no forgiveness on earth ("The priest and levite ignore my suffering," says the poet), he hopes for a heavenly amnesty. "It is the time of repentance," exclaims Andrew, alluding both to the usage of Lent and probably to his personal situation. Thus practically everything is touched on in ode 1; a number of aspects of the main theme, however, are subsequently taken up and developed further. Ode 2 begins with repentance and divine mercy: he expects salvation to be granted him not because of his righteous actions but because God is merciful; "save me", he entreats God, "as your creature". Another new nuance in ode 2 is a shift in the nature of the sins confessed: even though he keeps lamenting his "shameful *logismoi*", the emphasis is put on his love of property and lack of ascetic ἀκησία. In the second part of this ode the poet puts aside the theme of repentance and speaks of his fear of God, the supreme Judge:<sup>42</sup> Andrew is a criminal since he committed manslaughter by killing his soul; no, it was not he who perpetrated this, but the arrows of the Fiend which pierced his soul and body. In ode 3 Andrew repeats some of his previous statements (e.g., the entreaty addressed to God to save the sinner, since God was "my creator") and introduces a new theme: he admonishes his soul to flee to "the mountain" from the flood or Sodom of the common life. Ode 4 sustains this theme but shifts from biblical to an eschatological interpretation: the end is near—but is this end personal or collective? Again the poet is ambiguous, balancing between the individual and the impersonal. The end means judgement, and Andrew calls on himself (and his audience) to repent, to wake up, to examine his (their) actions. Ode 5 is devoted to the next step in his progress toward purification: he approaches God, he touches the hem of Christ's garment, he sees in his mind the eternal light, and he summons up the courage to ask God: "What shall I bring Thee (τί σοί ποτε προσενεγκεῖν)?" The answer comes in ode 6: the tears of my eyes and my deep sighs. And, differently in ode 7: my words (τὰ ῥήματά μου) as my tears. The two last odes repeat the familiar themes: tears and atonement, fear of the Judge, entreaty for salvation.

Unquestionably, Andrew is iterative in the *Megas Kanon*, returning again and again to the same elements (sin, salvation, repentance, soul, tears, and so forth),<sup>43</sup> but within this general pattern he shows compositional flexibility: he introduces nuances in each ode and gives his exposition movement. In a certain sense, the *Megas Kanon* is closer to his homilies than the other kanons are: the poet uses biblical imagery, first from the Old Testament,

<sup>42</sup> On the judicial terminology in Andrew's works see N. TOMADAKES, *Κρίσις καὶ κριτήριο ὑμνογραφικῶς*, *Mneme G. A. Petropoulou* 2, Athens 1984, 389f. (four of five examples are taken from the *Megas kanon*).

<sup>43</sup> M. B. CUNNINGHAM, *Tradition and Innovation in the Homilies of St. Andreas of Crete*, *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Abstracts of Short Papers*, Washington 1986, 66, emphasizes the "highly repetitive nature" of Andrew's writings and especially of the *Megas Kanon*.



and in ode 9 from the New Testament. Further, we have already seen that his vocabulary in the *Megas Kanon* is more “exquisite” than that in other kanons. He employs metaphors: in ode 2 Andrew says that his soul was erecting the castle of passions, but God destroyed its devices; in ode 4 he laments that his lamp is extinguished without oil, his chamber is locked, his dinner devoured, and he is doomed to wait outside, with fettered arms and legs. His play with words is exquisite as well: we find here not only simple alliterations such as “dripping drops of your tears” (σταγόνας στάλαξον δακρύων σου) but elegant hidden assonance such as “the time of life runs like a dream, like a flower,” where ὄναρ and χρόνος are constructed of almost identical sounds, only positioned in different sequences.

The *Megas Kanon* is a work on the border between two genres: homily and kanon. And it is a work on the border of two approaches, where the sincerity of Andrew’s personal experience is sublimated and receives collective significance.

*E. The man described by Andrew: The tale of St. Patapios*  
(BHG 1425-1428, CPG 8188)

Ed. PG 97, 1205-1254

We have attempted to show that the borderline between homily and kanon was relative, the similarity of both genres being more marked than their differences. Even more evanescent is the distinction between the homily and the *vita* of a saint. The tale of the Egyptian hermit St. Patapios, two versions of which were produced by Andrew, is characterized by the author as an *enkomion*, and it could be categorized as either a homily or a *vita*.<sup>44</sup> The image of Patapios himself is abstract, shadowy: he shone in virtue and deed, he seized the Heavenly Kingdom, he reposed in the tents of the saints, he worked merciful miracles (lit. the grace of miracles) (PG 97, 1244B). Virtue plays the part of his mother, feeding and educating him through his life and raising him to beauty and bright comeliness (col. 1213C), and the Heavenly Jerusalem should be called his motherland; it is only because Andrew is afraid that some overinquisitive people, interested in earthly matter, would dub Patapios as an outcast (ἄπολις, col. 1216CD), that he condescends to inform his reader that the saint’s earthly place of birth was Egyptian Thebes. The statement reveals that abstraction in creating an image is in Andrew’s work neither an accident nor the result of a lack of skill or knowledge, but a literary position: material detail is of no import, at least in theory. Andrew uses rhetorical figures, especially contrast, to characterize his hero: Patapios was a citizen of the desert and a custodian of the world, an angel on earth and a

<sup>44</sup> On Patapios see P. CANART, Le dossier hagiographique des SS. Baras, Patapios et Raboulas, AB 87, 1969, 448-454.

man of heaven; he dwelt on earth as if it were heaven and mystically, in spirit, he journeyed in heaven as if on land (col. 1208BC). Patapios was a thaumaturge, a healer: his miracles encompass the cure of blindness, dropsy, breast cancer and demoniac possession, but his healing, unlike that of St. Artemios, is not “naturalistic” but purely spiritual, by means of words or by the soft imposition of the hand.

Two moments in the homily on Patapios contradict this prevailing principle of abstraction. In the first place, Andrew becomes evocative while developing a long ekphrasis of Egypt (col. 1220BD). He mentions that the land is thickly covered with cities, but the emphasis in his description is on the countryside: the fat soil, fertile fields, grass-producing lands, herds of horses and flocks of sheep and goats, cows and pigs. Particular attention is devoted to the system of irrigation: boats miraculously sailing near ploughmen, and the deeply indented fields transformed into a deep sea. And again, as in the characterization of the saint, rhetorical contrast serves as the major means of graphic depiction: Egypt possesses gold and precious stones and at the same time provides [people] with goods that are spiritual; she bears the repute of reputelessness (δόξα ἀδοξίας) and promises fatness of flesh, together with unfading renown and mystical insight. Another unusual feature of the *Enkomion* is Andrew’s profound interest in the process of writing and picturing: the whole narrative is permeated by images from the sphere of rhetoric such as *enkomion*, discourse (*logos*), narration (*diegesis*), constructive argument (*kataskheue*), Attic dialect, and so on. The image of the painter is elaborated: he applies manifold colors, casts a shade, sets a *stèle* (statue?) like a meaningful sign, and creates diverse animals and clearly outlined countenances (col. 1213C). Moreover, Andrew relates how he, already the bishop of Crete, visited an Egyptian monastery, and with some scepticism inquired there about the cult of Patapios, but refused to compose an *enkomion*; then the next night Patapios himself came to him in a vision, accompanied by a crowd of men in white attire (meaning angels), reproached him for his lack of faith and commanded him to write (col. 1237A-1240C).

The rhythmic pattern of the oration is often poetic. Thus in the scene where a lad possessed by demons is healed (col. 1225C), the writer not only systematically sets participles and verbs at the end of the kola, creating a tense diction unusual in prose, but he reinforces this “strangeness” by a system of dactylic endings: ἐλαυνόμενος, κατεχόμενος, ἠύρισκετο, κατεφέρετο, ἐμαστιζετο, and so forth. He accumulates synonyms, making the demon complain: “I am defeated, I am beaten, I give up now, and I depart for the desert.” Obeying the saint, the evil spirit “convulsed the lad, and broke loose (ἐσπάραξεν and ἔρρηξεν form an assonance), and departed like a smoke from his mouth, and fled like an Erinys (ἐριννύς, but might it not be ἐρίνεος, [wisp of] wool?) up in the air” (col. 1228BC). The sentences are closer to verse than prose.

Andrew of Crete was an innovator both in the area of hymnography and in that of homiletic. He reached a high level of abstract, motionless, repetitive discourse, freed from concrete persons and objects, and from the marks of time and place; he envisaged the universe as united in its contradictory ambiguity; he tried to be as impersonal and rational as possible. But beyond this abstract surface, there still is left some space for personal

emotions and "naturalistic" details, for the joy of rhetorical word-play, for a masterly use of vocabulary as a means to express ideas, even when they were not clearly formulated.

In the sixth century another hymnographer originating from Syria, Romanos the Melode, created masterpieces of religious poetry; he wrote mainly on the themes of the Old and New Testament, but unlike Andrew he adorned biblical tales with dynamic dialogues, dramatic recreation of scenes, and descriptions of personages involved. The form of hymns he worked in, the kontakion, consisted of an introductory prooimion followed by a number of strophes (stanzas) and a refrain. Romanos was well remembered in the late seventh century, and the author of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* made mention of him, but the kontakia of Romanos were soon superseded by kanons—in the same way as the majestic Hagia Sophia did not find a direct continuation in the architecture of the following centuries. Both Romanos and Hagia Sophia were highly praised but little imitated. The abstract, repetitive, rational hymnography of the Byzantines followed the path of Andrew much more than that of Romanos.

### CHAPTER THREE

## GERMANOS I, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

### A. Biography (BHG 697)

Ed. L. LAMZA, *Patriarch Germanos I. von Konstantinopel (715-730)*, Würzburg 1975  
[Das östliche Christentum, N.F. 27], 199-241

Germanos was a contemporary of Andrew of Crete. It is, however, impossible to determine whether he was Andrew's junior or senior contemporary. The only certain dates of his life are those of his episcopate: he served as patriarch of Constantinople from 715 to 730. Like Andrew, Germanos was proclaimed saint, an entry on him was included in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*, and an anonymous hagiographer compiled his *vita*. When was the *vita* written? Some scholars, beginning with the editor, A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, considered it a work produced soon after Germanos' death: thus H.-G. Beck placed it in the eighth century, F. Fuchs ca. 810, and Ch. Garton and L. Westerink in the ninth century,<sup>1</sup> whereas I. Ševčenko argued that the author used not only Theophanes but even Kedrenos, an idea developed by L. Lamza.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, both Halkin and Lackner, in their reviews of

<sup>1</sup> A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Μαυρογορδάτειος Βιβλιοθήκη. Ἀνέκδοτα ἑλληνικά*, Constantinople 1884, 2; F. FUCHS, *Die ökumenische Akademie von Konstantinopel im frühen Mittelalter*, *Bayerische Blätter für das Gymnasialschulwesen* 59, 1923, 177-192, cf. ID., *Die höheren Schulen von Konstantinopel im Mittelalter*, Leipzig-Berlin 1926 [Byzantinisches Archiv 8], repr. Amsterdam 1964, 10f.; BECK, *Kirche*, 506; Ch. GARTON-L. WESTERINK (eds.), *Germanos on Predestined Terms of Life*, Buffalo NY 1979, V n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 2. It was I. ANDREEV, *German i Tarasij, patriarhi konstantinopol'skie*, Sergiev Posad 1907, 187-189, who first questioned the contemporaneity of the *vita*. Cf. ID., *Sv. German, patriarh konstantinopol'skij*, *Bogoslovskij vestnik* 1897, May 167-186, Sept. 225-244; LAMZA, *Patriarch Germanos*, 26-52.

Lamza's monograph,<sup>3</sup> returned to the earlier date. They emphasized that 1) Germanos' biography is already in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* and other *synaxaria*, and it is more plausible that *synaxaria* drew upon the *vita* than the *vita* on *synaxaria*, as Lamza suggested; 2) the hagiographer's dependence on Kedrenos is not proved; 3) the *vita* is included in a pre-Metaphrastic collection (cod. Leimon. 43). Halkin therefore considered that there could be no doubt that the *vita* was a product of the restoration of Orthodoxy in 843.

The problem is not so easy to solve. Cod. Leimon. 43 is a manuscript of the twelfth or thirteenth century<sup>4</sup> that contains the *Eulogy of St. Baras* composed by John Mauropous in the eleventh century; it is true that the eulogy of St. Baras was copied by a different hand but that does not make the collection pre-Metaphrastic. The dependence on Kedrenos argued by Ševčenko and Lamza may have another explanation: Kedrenos took his material from the tenth-century chronicle of pseudo-Symeon, who may have been a source for the hagiographer as well. The entry in the *Synaxarium* is probably independent of (and earlier than?) the *vita*: there are no textual coincidences in the two texts besides the statement that Germanos, when resigning from his office, left his *omophorion* on the holy altar. Whatever the case, the *vita* is chronologically removed from Germanos' time, contains grave errors (e.g., confusion of the popes Gregory I Dialogus and Germanos' contemporary Gregory II), and is legendary ("un pot-pourri sans valeur" in Lemerle's phrase<sup>5</sup>): not only does Germanos act as a prophet and healer, but the hagiographer also tells how when Germanos threw the icon of Christ into the sea, in just a day it arrived in Rome and was solemnly received by the pope Gregory Dialogus. All in all, the *vita* was most probably the work of the eleventh or late tenth century.<sup>6</sup>

The chronological framework of Germanos' life can be established only approximately. It is usually assumed that he died ca. 740; at any event, it must have been after his resignation. The Byzantines believed that he had reached a very old age, more than ninety years<sup>7</sup> or a hundred and five years.<sup>8</sup> Even if we trust the more modest of the two dates, Germanos' birth needs to be dated to ca. 650 (740-90=650), but the *Synaxarium* makes him older by stating (col. 677.22) that Germanos lived during the reign of Herakleios, i.e. before 641. The anonymous hagiographer affirms, however, that in 705 Germanos turned thirty seven; he was then in the middle of his life (ed. Lamza, 204.76-79).

<sup>3</sup> F. HALKIN, *AB* 93, 1975, 422-424; W. LACKNER, *BZ* 71, 1978, 90-96.

<sup>4</sup> See EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* I, 430.

<sup>5</sup> LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 92 n. 65.

<sup>6</sup> On the stories of Christ's and the Virgin's icons dispatched by the patriarch Germanos to Rome and the related Maria-Romaia legends, see LAMZA, *Patriarch Germanos*, 26.

<sup>7</sup> A. DMITRIEVSKIĬ, *Opisanie liturgiĭeskikh' rukopisej*, vol. 1. *Typika*, Kiev 1895, 72.19-20; cf. *SynCP*, col. 679.3.

<sup>8</sup> DOBSCHÜTZ, *Christusbilder*, 246\*.11.

Taken at face value, this information gives Germanos the dates of 668-742; whether these hagiographical dates are entirely reliable is another question.

According to the *vita*, Germanos was a son of the *patrikios* Justinian. The names of Justinian and Germanos led E. Stein to the conclusion that both men were relatives of the emperor Justinian I.<sup>9</sup> The hagiographer narrates further that the emperor Constantine IV Pogonatos (668-85) ordered the execution of the *patrikios* Justinian, whom he suspected of desiring his overthrow. The execution took place immediately after Justinian's return from Sicily where he had suppressed the revolt of 668. On the other hand, an addition to Theophanes (ed. De Boor, p. 352 app.) relates that Justinian himself was involved in the mutiny in Sicily. Right after that the young Germanos was castrated and enlisted into the clergy of Hagia Sophia; the hagiographer asserts that he was at that time twenty years old (this contradicts the statement that he turned thirty-seven in 705). The story may be true, but it is suspiciously similar to the story about another patriarch, Ignatios, who also was castrated and forced to become a monk after the deposition of his father, the emperor Michael I Rangabe, in 813. The legend did not have Germanos the son of an emperor, but nonetheless the son of a bearer of an imperial name, Justinian. Be this as it may, Germanos was most probably born in Constantinople to the family of a high-ranking dignitary.

He made an ecclesiastical career for himself and became, according to his biographer, bishop of Kyzikos in 705/6. I. Andreev's hypothesis that this appointment occurred earlier, soon after the council at Trullo 692,<sup>10</sup> is based on an *argumentum ex silentio* and therefore is not persuasive. Like Andrew of Crete, the bishop of Kyzikos was involved in the Monothelite "heresy" in 712, a fact that is naturally silenced by his hagiographer (but revealed by Theophanes). This slight deviation from traditional Orthodoxy did not hamper his election to the patriarchal throne several years later. At first on good terms with Germanos, the emperor Leo III (717-41) came to clash with him when the patriarch refused to accept Iconoclasm. The attitude of the patriarch toward the veneration of icons, unlike that of Andrew of Crete, is clearly attested in many sources, beginning with his own letters read during the Seventh Ecumenical council of 787 and surviving in the minutes of the council (PG 98, 147-194), and the letters of the pope Gregory II addressed to Leo III, whose authenticity has been questioned by some scholars.<sup>11</sup> Germanos returned to this topic in his homilies, criticizing [Leo] the *Eikonomachos* (PG 98, 232A) and praising the varied colors of icons (col. 356C).

Germanos was compelled to resign in 730, and retired to Platanion, his γονικὸς οἶκος (Theoph. 409.9-10), most probably his inherited mansion, where he died.

<sup>9</sup> E. STEIN, Die Abstammung des ökumenischen Patriarchen Germanus I., *Klio* 16, 1919/20, 207.

<sup>10</sup> ANDREEV, *German i Tarasij*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> On the question of their authenticity see, among others works, J. GOUILLARD, *Aux origines de l'Iconoclasme. Le témoignage de Grégoire II?*, *TM* 3, 1968, 243-307; H. MICHELS, *Zur Echtheit der Briefe Papst Gregors II. an Kaiser Leon III.*, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 99, 1988, 376-391.



Germanos was a prolific author.<sup>12</sup> He wrote treatises<sup>13</sup> and epistles on dogmatic and philosophical topics, and, like Andrew of Crete, homilies and poems. In some cases the manuscript tradition ascribes to Germanos works that he could not have produced, while in others it is difficult to verify the authorship of the works attributed to him. The *Book on Dreams* (*Oneirokritikon*) ascribed in a manuscript of the thirteenth century to the patriarch of Constantinople Germanos is not his, since it contains borrowings from Achmet, who lived not earlier than 830.<sup>14</sup> The treatise *On Predestined Terms of Life*, republished recently by Garton and Westerink (as in fn. 1), appears in some manuscripts as a work of the patriarch Photios. A *Homily on the liberation of Constantinople* from the siege of the Arabs was published by V. Grumel as a work of Germanos on the basis of the manuscript tradition; P. Speck, however, denied its authenticity due to the paucity of its factual information and to its stylistic features, which differ radically from those of the genuine homilies of the patriarch.<sup>15</sup> Since there was another patriarch Germanos, who administered the Church in Nicaea in 1223-40, the possibility of an attribution to the later namesake remains open, unless the manuscript tradition or content (for instance, the mention of Constantinople) precludes such a suggestion. Especially problematic is the attribution of Germanos' poems,<sup>16</sup> which have even fewer chronological indications than his homilies. The published *Menaion* includes under August 16 a kanon ascribed to "the patriarch Germanos" on the transfer of the "not-made-by-hands" icon of the Lord from Edessa to the capital;<sup>17</sup> since the Mandylion of Edessa was brought to Constantinople in 944, Germanos I cannot be the author of this kanon.<sup>18</sup> Was he the author of other kanons and *idiomela* preserved in numerous *Menaia* under the heading "of the patriarch Germanos" or simply "of Germanos" which are frequently presented in other manuscripts anonymously? There are some formal features (such as the presence of the second ode or

<sup>12</sup> Besides CPG 8001-8033 and BECK's *Kirche* consult BARDENHEWER, *Altchristliche Literatur* 5, 48-51, *Tusculum-Lexikon*, Munich 1982, 285f., and P. PLANK, *Der heilige Germanos I., Patriarch von Konstantinopel* (715-730), *Der christliche Osten* 40, 1985, 16-21.

<sup>13</sup> His treatise *Antapodotikos*, written to "clear" Gregory of Nyssa from Origenistic interpolations, is lost and known primarily from PHOTIOS' *Bibliotheca*, cod. 233. See also a *vita* of Gregory of Nyssa, in: W. LACKNER, *Ein hagiographisches Zeugnis für den 'Antapodotikos' des Patriarchen Germanos I. von Konstantinopel*, *Byzantion* 38, 1968, 42-104.

<sup>14</sup> F. DREXL, *Das Traumbuch des Patriarchen Germanos*, *Laographia* 7, 1923, 431.

<sup>15</sup> V. GRUMEL, *Homélie de saint Germain sur la délivrance de Constantinople*, *REB* 16, 1968, 183-205; P. SPECK, *Klassizismus im achten Jahrhundert?*, *REB* 44, 1986, 209-227; J. DARROUZÈS, *Deux traités inédits du patriarche Germain*, *REB* 45, 1987, 8, refuses to determine "l'origine exacte" of this homily.

<sup>16</sup> See lists in FOLLIERI, *Initia* V, 259f. and SZÖVÉRFY, *Hymnography* 2, 17; cf. also E. FOLLIERI, *Santi Persiani nell'innografia bizantina, Atti del convegno sul tema La Persia e il mondo greco-romano*, Rome 1966, 229, n. 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Menaion* VIII, 1976, 162-173. Its incipit is σωματικῶς μορφωθῆναι: FOLLIERI, *Initia* III, 608.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. however Av. CAMERON, *The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of a Story*, *HUKSt* 7, 1983, 89 on the speech in which Germanos refers to the image of Edessa.

of a *triadikon*) that may indicate the authorship of Germanos I; but often the attribution remains hypothetical, even though in many cases the content of kanons ascribed in manuscripts to the patriarch supports the possibility of his authorship. Thus in the *Kanon on St. Meletios* (AHG IX, 247-255) the poet reminds his listeners of the saint's victory over the enemy whom he compares with the Assyrians of the previous time (l. 47-49). This may be a reference to Leo III's defeat of the Arabs. It is possible that the Iconodule theme is reflected in the *Kanon on St. Polycarp of Smyrna* (AHG VI, 364-374) in which the hymnographer praises the saint for destroying the *helepoleis* of heresies (l. 42-43), and for molding the tablets of his heart with divine images (θεογραφους) and painting them with blood, not ink (l. 61-64). In the *Kanon on St. Dios* (AHG XI, 347-358) the author asks the saint to care for "the city of the Kingdom of Christ" and mentions the monastery of St. Dios located in Constantinople; he uses several times "iconic" terminology, speaking of the genuine countenance of the saint's virtues imitating the divine icon (l. 6-10, cf. l. 158) or of the soul depicted (μορφῶσαι) by the colors of virtues (l. 155). Germanos praises the saintly physicians Florus and Laurus (whose relics were deposited in Constantinople) (AHG XII, 207-216<sup>19</sup>) and speaks of the Church venerating their relics "as an icon of incorruption" (l. 11-14, cf. l. 29). Kosmas and Damianos comprise another pair of physician saints (AHG XI, 1-10), and the poet mentions their reliquary (l. 141) and holy bones (l. 32-33). Tentatively we may juxtapose these hymns devoted to the saintly healers venerated in Constantinople with the cult of St. Artemios, also a healer and also appropriated by Constantinople, probably around the time of Germanos or slightly earlier.

### B. The Marian homilies

(CPG 8007-8012, BHG 1103-1104, 1145n,r, 1119, 1135, 1155 and 1155b)

As in the work of Andrew of Crete, the theme of the Virgin held a very significant place in Germanos' writings.<sup>20</sup> Among the homilies published in PG 98, only two, *On the adoration of the Cross* and *On the burial of Christ* (the latter probably by Germanos II), deal with non-Marian themes; they are followed by two homilies *On the Presentation of the Virgin*,<sup>21</sup> one *On the Annunciation*, three *On the Dormition* (M. Jugie suggested that the first and the

<sup>19</sup> The name of the poet appears only in a single manuscript, Sinait. 631, 10th-11th c. The editor, A. PROIOU (AHG XII, 481f.), persuasively argues that Germanos was the author of the poem.

<sup>20</sup> The Italian translation of seven Marian homilies in V. FAZZO, *Germano di Costantinopoli, Omelie mariologiche*, Rome 1985.

<sup>21</sup> E. M. TONIOLO, *Sull'Ingresso della Vergine nel Santo dei Santi. Una finale inedita di omelia bizantina*, *Marianum* 36, 1974, 101-105, published a fragment of a homily *on the Presentation* and considered it a work of Germanos.

second were parts of a single sermon)<sup>22</sup> and one *On the girdle of Mary*. A. Wenger, however, questioned Germanos' authorship of another homily *On the Dormition* attributed in the manuscript Mosqu. 215 (9th century) to Germanos, archbishop of Constantinople, which he finds inconsistent with the genuine sermons by the patriarch.<sup>23</sup>

Thus Germanos shared Andrew's concern with the Theotokos. Interestingly, like Andrew, he used the rare word *θεόπαις* (PG 98, 292C, 300B) to describe her. The style of narration, however, seems different from what we have observed in the speeches by Andrew.

The first homily *On the Presentation* (PG 98, 291-340), after a short exordium, begins with a motif of motion: "Today the three-year old [girl] comes to the temple of the law," and the whole scene is replete with verbs of motion and action: the child is given to the priest, the gift is brought, Ioakeim goes ahead, Anna announces, the door is flung open, the Virgin is led in, etc. All this commotion is depicted long before the discourse comes to a flashback: the story about overcoming Anna's barrenness and the birth of the Theotokos. The tension reflected in the verbs of motion and action is reinforced by an anaphora: eight times Germanos begins his kola with the same word "*today* (*σήμερον*)", a word that itself emphasizes the action. The sermon begins not as a theological discourse but as an introduction to earthly festivity. And not only its beginning is full of action; the movement continues. After the praise of the Virgin, Germanos again puts everything in motion: Mary's parents offer her to God; she is led into the temple; she walks straight forward (*ἀμεταστρεπτί*); Anna and her spouse enter the temple with their daughter and the doors are flung open. Later on, Zacharias' speech is full of verbs of action: peep out, enter, approach, march, ascend (with the figure of geminatio: *ἀνάβηθι, ἀνάβηθι*).

The discourse is divided into several sections that are underscored by stylistic marks: after the story of the introduction to the temple, Germanos says, "And thus her parents offered her... to God"; after Anna's narration about her barrenness, he stops again and concludes: "Prudent Anna changed her ways, as is proper, according to such deliberations;" and then once more, "Such was the accord of the just [Anna and Ioakeim], such was the voice of the God-loving couple"; and Zacharias' intervention is concluded by the sentence, "The old man behaved in this way." Unlike Andrew's homilies this sermon consists of scenes each of which presents an accomplished action or announcement.

This "down-to-earth" tendency is even more marked in the second homily *On the Presentation*. In the first homily the Virgin was introduced to the temple as if her destiny

<sup>22</sup> JUGIE, *Mort et Assomption*, 226-233. On the authenticity of these homilies see, ID., *Les homélies de saint Germain de Constantinople sur la dormition de la sainte Vierge*, EO 16, 1913, 219-221. According to M. DE ROSA, *La dormizione vitale della Madonna*, Atessa 1976, 44-47, the homilies contain substantial interpolations, an assertion that is always difficult to prove. See also A. P. ORBAN, *Die lateinische Übersetzung einer 'Doppelpredigt' des Germanos I. auf die Koimesis Mariä*, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 38, 1989, 23f.

<sup>23</sup> A. WENGER, *Un nouveau témoin de l'assomption: une homélie attribuée à saint Germain de Constantinople*, REB 16, 1958, 46f.

were already known to Anna: referring to David she called Mary "King's daughter" (Ps. 44.14); she is the gate for the Emmanuel and *theopais*. In the second homily, however, Zacharias, while meeting Anna, says nothing about the future (even though, being a prophet, he was aware of it), but addresses Anna in plain words: "Who are you, woman?" This is followed by a long narration by Anna on her barrenness and the miraculous birth, whereas Zacharias' prophecy, which follows only after this, is relatively short. A single detail stresses the simplification of the story in the second homily: in the first sermon (PG 98, 301D), Zacharias solemnly says to Mary: "Give your hands to me, who leads you as an infant; hold the hand of the man wearied out by old age (Germanos uses a fine assonance: *κράτει χεῖρα τῷ γήρᾳ κεκμηκότῃ*)... and lead me to life." This metaphorical guidance to life disappears in the second homily: Zacharias simply stands holding the child in his arms (col. 312D, cf. col. 316B; the Greek used the same word for arm and hand). The organization of the story is clearer in the second sermon: besides simple clauses such as "having heard this" and "having said this and similar things", we meet a more complex situation. Before Germanos turns to his epilogue, he notes: "[It is time to] return our speech to the preceding subject and to glorify the day we are celebrating today" (col. 317A). The discourse has its preamble and epilogue, and between the two there are several scenes in which the mystical and metaphorical elements play a reduced part. "Artistic" time—the time of the discourses—does not coincide with the linear time of historical events. In the first homily the theme of the "barren and fruitless" Anna emerges after the writer has mentioned that Anna had suckled her daughter. Even clearer is the reverse of artistic time in the second sermon: Anna's entire tale is told after the entrance into the temple, while Zacharias was holding Mary in his arms.

A difference in compositional technique is evident when comparing Germanos' sermons *On the Presentation* and Andrew's homilies. In Germanos' work there is stricter organization of material and the perception that events are in motion rather than in mystical uniformity. There may be a number of explanations for this: the subject, for example, may demand that the Presentation in the Temple requires more "movement" than the Annunciation; alternatively, it may be due to the sources employed (Germanos used the *Protevangelium Jacobi*, ch. VII.2 and VIII.12<sup>24</sup>); on the other hand, it may be due to an intrinsic difference in the authors' styles. Let us, now, turn to other homilies of the Constantinopolitan patriarch.

Germanos' sermon *On the Annunciation*<sup>25</sup> has a direct parallel in the *œuvre* of Andrew, thus making the distinction between the two even more obvious. Unfortunately, the text as published in PG 98, 319-340, is mutilated, with the end missing (although it survived in some manuscripts). The discourse is rigidly organized, beginning with a short

<sup>24</sup> J. LIST, *Studien zur Homiletik Germanos I. von Konstantinopel und seiner Zeit*, Athens 1939, 10f.

<sup>25</sup> CPG 8009, BHG 1145n. G. LA PIANA, *Le rappresentazioni sacre nella letteratura bizantina*, Grottaferrata 1912, 109-127, stresses its special character; cf. ID., *The Byzantine Theater*, *Speculum*

exordium describing the "imperial synaxis" (in Constantinople?) convened to celebrate the feast; then follows the *chairetismos* and two dialogues, between Gabriel and Mary and between Mary and Joseph. Each dialogue consists of twenty four double sentences (statement and counter-statement) constructed in alphabetical order, both the first statement and counter-statement beginning with the letter A, the next pair with B, and so on down to Ω. The alphabetical organization of topic is not unknown in Greek literature preceding Germanos: alphabetical acrostics were used in iambic collections of moral sayings by Gregory of Nazianzus (PG 37, 908-910) and by George of Pisidia.<sup>26</sup> However, the alphabetical dialogues in the sermon *On the Annunciation* differ substantially from their predecessors: they are in prose, they are not a collection of moral aphorisms, but a conversation between two persons, and they are double —each address of Gabriel and each response of Maria, as a pair open with the same letter, and in the dialogue of Mary and Joseph some pairs begin with the same word (e.g. ἄσπιλον, βῆμα, γέγραπται, ξενίσει, τάχα). The alphabetical game is interwoven with other wordplay: Gabriel speaks to Mary of the royal dignity, she responds by referring to her virginal dignity; to his προμηνύει, "it foretells," she counters μηνύεις (you inform). A complex figure conexum (anaphora+epiphora) is produced by Mary in her conversation with Joseph: "The day of affliction overwhelms me and oppressive suspicion attacks me, and my bridegroom's interrogation weights down on me, and my pregnancy accuses me." Each kolon begins with a feminine noun ending with the sound of -sis: θλίψις, μέμψις, ἐξέτασις, κυοφόρησις, and finishes with a personal pronoun directed by a verb indicating assault; and the positioning of verbs at the end of kola gives Mary's statements the force of verse.

The dialogues are unique in their content as well: in these structurally formalized exchanges Germanos creates characters and depicts a tense situation. The first dialogue is

11, 1936, 182. The manuscript tradition attributes the text to some other authors as well, such as Leontios of Neapolis, Sophronios, John of Damascus or Chrysostom. BHG 1145p is another (?) version crowned with an epilogue. The edition of D. FECIORU in *Biserica ortodoxă română* 64, 1946, was unavailable for us (see note in BZ 43, 1950, 417). Cf. H.-G. BECK, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend*, Munich 1978, 113-115, and W. PUCHNER, Τό βυζαντινὸ θέατρο, *Kentron epistemonikon ereunon: Epeteris* 11, 1981-82, 214-217.

<sup>26</sup> L. STERNBACH, Georgii Pisidiae carmina inedita, *Wiener Studien* 13, 1891, 58-62. On Byzantine alphabetaria see KRUMBACHER, *GBL* 717-720; D. N. ANASTASIEJWIĆ, Alphabete, *BZ* 16, 1907, 479-501. The closest parallel to Germanos' dialogue that we are aware of is the poetic laudation of the Mother of God by Proklos (mid-fifth century) that includes "the alphabetic-acrostic dialogue between Mary and Gabriel and between Mary and Joseph"; on this see P. MAAS, *Das Kontakion*, *BZ* 19, 1910, 292f. S. G. MERCATI, Alfabeti intromessi nelle versioni greche di s. Efrem Siro, *EEBS* 23, 1953, 41-44, published a short alphabetical list of moral sentences in prose ascribed to Ephraim; its date remains unknown. Probably, Germanos applied alphabetical structure in his poetry as well; cf. S. EUSTRATIADES, Ἡ ἀκολουθία τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου καὶ τὰ μεγαλυνάρια τοῦ Ἐπιταφίου, *Nea Sion* 33, 1938, 435. It is worth noting that the *Akathistos hymnos* consists of 24 stanzas alphabetically arranged.

a conversation between God's messenger, who arrives armed with a complete knowledge of the future events, and a simple girl unable to understand neither his allusions nor the possibility that a virgin will give birth to a child. Her vocabulary is appropriate to her position: "Go away from my town," she says to Gabriel, "I am not accustomed to have social intercourse with a stranger" (the sexual overtone of the meeting is clear throughout the conversation). "I am afraid and trembling," and finally, "How will you kiss (ἀσπάξεσαι) a lass whom you have never seen?" "I have a fiancé, a carpenter," she explains to Gabriel, anxious not to be accused of infidelity. On the contrary, Gabriel's vocabulary is solemn: "Listen, O glorious one, to the concealed words," he begins, and he promises her rejoicing worth being heard and the enkômion she deserves; "You will grasp the power of the mystery beyond understanding." Nobody would usually have talked in this way to an artless Palestinian girl. It is only natural that she is unable to appreciate his sublime metaphors when he addresses her as "the God bearing throne (θεοβάστακτος<sup>27</sup>, the word is prepared in the *chairetismos*, at the beginning of the sermon)" and "the royal seat of the Heavenly Kingdom".

A similar game is repeated in the dialogue of Mary and Joseph. She, who at the end of her conversation with the archangel accepts the divine mission required of her, speaks to Joseph aware of her high destiny. Her speech becomes rhetorical, her vocabulary contains highly elaborate compounds as ἀνθρωποσχηματισθείς, "having assumed human shape".<sup>28</sup> The simple carpenter is struck by the change in his bride: she was a virgin when he took her into his house, and now she became unexpectedly a mother-to-be —Mary endeavors to persuade him that she has remained undefiled; he menaces her with the tribunal of Jewish judges; she refers to the Last Judgment; he threatens to cut off the head of the culprit with his carpenter's "sword", i.e. saw. In other words, in both dialogues the play is based on the clash of two levels of knowledge and of two lexical registers.

In the sixth century, the great Romanos the Melode wrote a kontakion *On the Annunciation*.<sup>29</sup> Naturally, two dialogues form the core of the hymn in which every strophe ends with the *chairetismos* "Hail, unwed bride (in the original a paronomasia: νύμφη ἀνύμφευτε)." Romanos' kontakion avoids the mundane and it does not possess the dynamism of the sermon of Germanos: either in respect of its imagery or its vocabulary there is no difference in the level of speech of Gabriel and Mary, and there is virtually no conversation between the two. Mary says "to herself" (strophe 5.1), and Gabriel speaks "to himself" (strophe 7.3), and when the words are actually pronounced (more in soliloquy than in

<sup>27</sup> The word is not recorded in the catalogue of Mary's hymnic epithets: S. EUSTRATIADES, *Ἡ Θεοτόκος ἐν τῇ ὑμνογραφίᾳ*, Paris 1930; in LAMPE, its use is substantiated only by two references to Germanos.

<sup>28</sup> The word is not recorded in LAMPE. E. TRAPP, *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, Vienna 1994, 111 refers only to this sentence of Germanos.

<sup>29</sup> *Romanos le Mélode, Hymnes*, ed. J. GROSIDIER DE MATONS, 2, Paris 1965 [SC 110], 20-41, Engl. tr. M. CARPENTER, *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist 2*, Columbia Miss. 1973, 9-24.

interlocution) Mary, from the very beginning, suspects that she is conversing with a celestial being and not, as in Germanos' sermon, a stranger trying to seduce her: she sees "an appearance of fire" that has the voice of a man (strophe 3.8) and wonders whether he is an angel or human (strophe 6.1); she uses sublime metaphor, calling herself the unploughed, uncultivated land destined to produce fruit without receiving seed or a sower (strophe 9.7-8). Comparison with the Melode demonstrates how original Germanos was in his treatment of the theme of the Annunciation.

The homilies *On the Dormition* form a complex case. The first sermon (corresponding to the two first sermons in PG 98, 340-357) is abstract and without a narrative, the only deviation from a general praise of the Theotokos being the introduction of the first person: "I dare laud you," the poet exclaims at the beginning. The second (third) sermon (PG 98, 360-372) is, according to the author's definition, a tale (διήγησις); Germanos begins with Christ's concern not to alarm his Mother with the news of her imminent death; he therefore sends her a messenger (a parallel to the Annunciation sermon?) who foretells (the already familiar verb προμηνύει is used) her Dormition. Again, as in the homily *On the Annunciation*, the scene with the angel is replete with verbs of motion, and unlike the first sermon *On the Dormition*, Germanos places emphasis here not only on the salvation of Mary's soul but also on her material aspect, her undefiled body that is to be buried in Gethsemane by His disciples. As in the Annunciation homily, Mary's reaction remains on the homily in everyday level: she kindles light throughout the house, cleans the rooms, prepares her bed and summons her friends and neighbors. When the guests weep, she says that such is her son's will, and she cannot be separated from her divine son, just as ordinary parents cannot imagine staying away from their mortal children. A tempest strikes, and through the long storm the disciples start to arrive, some of whom (Peter, Paul and John) are introduced by name. All is reversed in this farewell scene, the disciples who came to console her are now weeping, and it is she who commands them not to mourn; she then goes to bed and dies quietly as if falling asleep. The narrative relies again on apocryphal sources, namely the Pseudo-Iohannis, *Liber de Dormitione Mariae*, but it is interesting that Germanos was able to write on the same topic both in an abstract (theological) manner and in lifelike concrete scenes. It seems, however, that he differed from Andrew to the extent that his discourses were full of motion and had a stricter organization. List, who compared the style of Germanos' homilies not with Andrew but with two speeches of the Greek translation of Ephraim the Syrian on the sinner who washed the feet of the Lord (Luke 7.36-59), emphasized the dependence of Germanos on the Greek Ephraim. The difference between the two consists not in substance but in measure: Germanos has lost some of the conversational liveness of his predecessor.<sup>30</sup> **Andrew went further than Germanos in a process that we may define as the hymnization of homiletic discourse.**

<sup>30</sup> LIST, *Studien*, 50-52, 89f.

### C. A whore of Egypt

Ed. AHG 8, 1970, 26-34, no. III

In our analysis of the homilies of Andrew of Crete we attempted to demonstrate the relativity of the difference between the prose sermon and the poetic kanon: the difference was primarily functional, whereas esthetic goals remained similar. Germanos moved in the same direction: not only did he use the verb ὑμνεῖν to describe his eulogy in both sermons and poems, but he also applied rhythmic structure to his prose laudations. Mercati demonstrated that the homilies *On the Presentation* contained several episodes composed in dodecasyllables that may have been borrowed (from the Greek Ephraim?) by Germanos or written by him;<sup>31</sup> Mercati also drew attention to the fact that a prayer to the Virgin in the *Sermon on the girdle* (PG 98, 377D) begins with the verse, Σὺ δέ μοι, ὦ πάντα-γνε καὶ πανάγαθε καὶ πολυεύσπλαγγνε Δέσποινα, τὸ τῶν Χριστιανῶν παραμύθιον (Thou, O my all-hallowed, all-good and most merciful Lady, the comfort of the Christians).

Until we have a corpus of Germanos' kanons and *idiomela*, all conclusions concerning his poetry will remain provisional and conjectural. One of the most interesting hymns attributed to Germanos (this time by two manuscripts: Vatic. 1212 and Regin. 61, of the 12th and the 13th centuries) is the *Kanon on St. Mary of Egypt*. The editor, C. Nikas, has no doubts that the kanon was the work of the patriarch of Constantinople. Mary, in the time of Germanos, had only recently been promoted to the status of saint. In the sixth century, Cyril of Scythopolis knew the story of a certain Mary who was a singer in the church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem and then took off to the desert with a basket of vegetables that lasted miraculously for seventeen years. Her grave became an object of veneration.<sup>32</sup> Soon afterwards a legend developed presenting Mary as a prostitute in Alexandria who sailed with a crowd of pilgrims to Jerusalem and was there converted to Christianity by a supernatural force which prevented her entrance into the church of the Anastasis. She then fled to the desert where she lived in solitude and was buried by a lion. The original *vita* was attributed to Sophronios of Jerusalem, but his authorship is now disputed. It was written most probably in the seventh century (BHG 1042). The story of the reformed harlot Mary became popular with the Byzantines: in the first half of the tenth century Euthymios the *Protasekretis* reworked and simplified the legend;<sup>33</sup> many hymns

<sup>31</sup> S. G. MERCATI, De nonnullis versibus dodecasyllabis S. Germani I CP. patriarchae homiliae Εἰς τὰ Εἰσόδια τῆς Θεοτόκου insertis, *Studi liturgici* 8, 1915 and *Roma e l'Oriente* 5, 1915, repr. in ID., *Collectanea byzantina* i, Bari 1970, 25-43.

<sup>32</sup> Kyrillos von Skythopolis, ed. E. SCHWARTZ, Leipzig 1939, 233f.

<sup>33</sup> F. HALKIN, Panégryque de Marie l'Égyptienne par Euthyme le protasekretis, *AB* 99, 1981, 17-44.



were devoted to her,<sup>34</sup> but it seems most unlikely that Germanos was the first poet to compose a hymn to Mary.

The main theme of his kanon, like that of Andrew's *Megas Kanon*, is that of repentance, the contrast of "the sword of pleasure" and "the remedy of temperance" (l. 11-13); and the kanon is overtly iconodule, Mary praying to "the holy icon of the Mother of God" (l. 19-20; cf. in several *theotokia*, l. 35, 50, 70, 114). The kanon is rigidly structured, revealing a slow development of the theme, formulated already in the first ode: the shift from license to atonement with the help of the icon of the Virgin. The second ode elaborates a series of oppositions: the Egypt of passions and the land free from passions (ἀπάθεια), defiling baptism and baptism by tears, corruption by the passion of the flesh and cleaning by the sweat of toil. Here salvation comes as a result of Mary's own efforts, but the third ode introduces a new theme: the Lord's mercy toward the whore. In the fourth ode, the poet employs a flashback reminding the listener of the lure of pleasure and the mark (lit. "wound") of bruises, of the time when Mary was still enslaved by passions. According to the fifth ode, Mary was saved by the power of the Cross. This central ode deals with concrete images: Mary crosses the stream of the Jordan river and trounces the demons. The theme of the stream is then translated into personal ethics: Mary, by shedding streams of tears, is victorious over the frenzy of passions. The theme of the sixth ode (compositionally unified by a refrain) is renewal through prayer leading to immortality; and the seventh ode develops this further, the way to immortality is paralleled by Mary's abandonment of earthly concerns for heavenly hopes (the rhyme φροντίδας-ἐλπίδας dramatizes the contrast), while the beauty of Paradise supplants shameful sin. The eighth ode (also containing a refrain) starts to generalize the theme: Mary mortifies her flesh by her most pious reasoning, and this is shown to be edifying, demonstrating the ability of the human mind to change; the poet begins to reiterate the imagery of preceding odes, such as the cross and baptism, heavenly bread and undefiled blood, passions and demons. The conclusion is reached in the last ode: the priest extols (μεγαλύνει—an important liturgical term, absent from Lampe) Mary, and she takes her place in the heavenly chambers. The rhetoric of the last ode is rich and graphic: Mary crossed the Jordan (a reiteration of the fifth ode) on foot (ποσί) and the priest extols the hallowed one (δοσίαν); Mary chased off the wild beasts of passions, but the wild beast (i.e. lion) buried her in the earth. The structure of the kanon is strict and logical; Germanos develops the theme step by step, and the repetition of certain images serves to enhance the steady movement of the idea of repentance.

The salvation of the former harlot, Germanos stresses, is to some extent a result of divine mercy (embodied in the cross and the icon), but the concept of her own will, prayer, tears and the flight to the desert (over the Jordan river) occupies the greater part of the kanon. The theme of the former prostitute's repentance is treated in another kanon, *On St. Pelagia*, again attributed to Germanos (AHG II, 73-79), but this poetic work is trivial; the

<sup>34</sup> FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/2, 218f.

author seems to take delight in the trite onomatopoeia Πελαγία-πέλαγος (l. 1-2, cf. l. 93-94) and banal oppositions, such as life and death (l. 14-15).

### D. Ecclesiastical History: The esthetic of symbols

Ed. D. Nilo BORGIA, *Il commentario liturgico di S. Germano patriarca Costantinopolitano*, Grottaferrata 1912; Engl. tr. J. MEYENDORFF, *St. Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy*, Crestwood NY 1984

A discourse somewhat intriguingly titled *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation* is also attributed to Germanos. It survives in numerous versions and redactions: some anonymous, some ascribed to Basil of Caesarea, one version attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem, and the longest redaction to Germanos. The names of Basil and Cyril are anachronisms, but the attribution of the original version to Germanos is possible, though not proven.<sup>35</sup> Whatever the case, Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the ninth-century Latin translator of the *Ecclesiastical History*, ascribed the text to the patriarch Germanos, though not without some reservations: the Greeks, he says, considered (*ut ferunt* or *ut fertur*) the work to be by Germanos.<sup>36</sup>

The discourse on the Liturgy is a non-literary text; however, besides its primary (liturgical) material, it contains the Byzantine theory of symbolic interpretation, and is therefore important for understanding the Byzantine approach to literary texts. The discourse has no prologue or epilogue, and consists, in Meyendorff's edition, of forty-three entries-explanations, that form three general sections. Germanos explains firstly the major parts of the ecclesiastical space, those linked to the holy office (the apse, the altar, the chancel, the ambo), and then moves on to the symbolic gestures of prayer and the church officiants. This part concludes with an interpretation of the symbolism of the sacred objects used during the divine office (bread, wine and water, chalice, diskos and *eiliton* [the cloth covering the altar], and censor). The Liturgy of the catechumens forms the second part of the treatise: antiphons and psalms, the First (or Little) Entrance, the reading of the Epistles

<sup>35</sup> F. J. THOMSON, Constantine of Preslav and the Old Bulgarian translation of the 'Historia ecclesiastica et mystica contemplatio' attributed to Patriarch Germanus I of Constantinople, *Palaeobulgarica* 10, 1986, 42-44. Less inclined to doubt are such scholars as R. BORNERT, *Les commentaires de la divine liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècles*, Paris 1966 [AOC 9], 142-160, R. TAFT, The Liturgy of the Great Church, *DOP* 34-35, 1980/81, 45f., and S. C. PARSON, The 'Historia ecclesiastica' of Germanus I of Constantinople, *Ekklesia kai theologia* 3, 1982, 5f. K. I. DYOBOUNIOTES, 'Επιτομή της ἐρμηνείας της λειτουργίας τοῦ Γερμανοῦ Α' Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, *Theologia* 21, 1950, 258, does not consider the treatise genuine, at least in the form in which we now have it.

<sup>36</sup> S. PETRIDÈS, *Traité liturgiques de saint Maxime et de saint Germain traduits par Anastase le Bibliothécaire*, *ROC* 10, 1905, 295.

and the Gospel, and the Cherubic Hymn. The interpretation of the Liturgy takes up the last part: the Great Entrance, the conveyance of the holy objects to the altar, the sacrament, the communion of the priests and of the assembly. The treatise ends with a detailed explanation of the Lord's Prayer and the dismissal. Apart from the slight confusion of sequence in the second part of the discourse (the intermixture of the description of sacred objects and of liturgical action itself), the text is clearly structured, moving steadily from one topic to another. The explanation proper is supplemented in some cases by narrative digressions, such as the story of Christ's crucifixion or Abraham's sacrifice or a note that Calvary (Kranion) received its name from the skull (κρανίον) of Adam, allegedly deposited in this location. There is, however, a remarkable omission from the whole presentation: the author diligently avoids the topic of icons. In par. 8 the writer defines the epistyle (κοσμήτης) of the chancel barrier (?) as "the proper (νομικός) and holy adornment showing (ἐμφαίνων) the seal of the crucified Christ of God; it is adorned by a cross." The verb ἐμφαίνω, used many times in the discourse (e.g. par. 10, 20, 24, 36), means to manifest or symbolize; the passage indicates that the epistyle was decorated by the sign of the cross that symbolizes the crucifixion of Christ. Not a single word is devoted to icon decoration, and the verb εἰκονίζω (par. 13) designates only "to symbolize":<sup>37</sup> for example, the tonsure on the head of the priest "symbolizes" the precious head of the apostle. Of course, the lack of icons in Germanos' commentary on the Liturgy may be the product of chance, perhaps on account of the nature of the treatise, which focuses on the symbolic interpretation of the sacramental and liturgical rites performed by God in the church<sup>38</sup> rather than on a detailed description of the ecclesiastical space.

How can we explain the composition of this text dealing with Eucharist, a theme situated in the core of the iconoclastic discourse on sacrality? Is the omission of the iconic representation, which elsewhere is a favorite of Germanos, due to the late introduction of the incensing of icons during the Liturgy or is it significative of the author's specific attitude on this issue? Was the text written before Germanos' resignation, when he still endeavored to maintain good relations with Leo III? Is, perhaps, the text not by Germanos himself, but merely attributed to him later owing to his high authority in the eyes of subsequent generations? It is easier to raise such questions than to answer them.

Whatever the reason for this absence, the *Ecclesiastical History* is a rational treatise whose aim is to explain the objects and the gestures consecrated by God in order to celebrate the rites of the Holy sacrifice. Unlike many great theologians of the late Roman empire who construed the world as a riddle that could be "solved" in images and metaphors rather than logical statements and who cherished a religious obscurity of

<sup>37</sup> The term ἱστορία is mentioned only once in a context that seems to indicate a pictorial representation: cf. BORNERT, *Les commentaires*, 170-171.

<sup>38</sup> Following tradition Germanos considers Holy Writ as presenting a literal account of "history". In the context of his treatise the Liturgy is viewed as the continuation of biblical history: cf. BORNERT, *Les commentaires*, 172.

expression,<sup>39</sup> Germanos emphasizes that it is Christianity that made the secret of life understandable. He formulates this principle in par. 31: "The Gospel is the coming of God... He no longer speaks to us through clouds and riddles [the word sounds polemical!] as once to Moses [when He made Himself manifest] through voices and lightning and trumpets, in sound and darkness and fire... but He appeared [ἐφάνη] visibly [ἐμφανῶς]." Germanos returns to the same opposition of clarity and obscurity in par. 41 when he depicts the priest conversing with God "no longer through a cloud as once did Moses... but with uncovered face seeing the glory of the Lord." And the patriarch continues: the priest announces the mysteries "hidden before the ages and from the generations, but which are now revealed to us." Closing the description of the Liturgy, Germanos stresses (par. 43), "With this good understanding (εὐνοία) we eat the bread and drink of the cup."

The purpose of the treatise is explanation. Verbs of explanation abound in the text: ἀντιτυπώ, σημαίνω, ἐμφαίνω, δηλώω, δεικνύω, μνηύω and so on. The objects are bearers of sublime meaning; moreover, they are, in their physical reality, the sublime phenomena: the wine and water are respectively the blood and fluid that gushed from Christ's side (par. 22), the Gospel is the coming of Christ (par. 31), and the Cherubic Hymn not only "signifies" (Meyendorff's translation) but is itself the entrance of all the saints and righteous with the Cherubic powers and the hosts of angels (par. 37).

Let us return to Germanos' homilies. Mary the Theotokos is the factual heroine of most of them, and Mary is commonly identified as a material object: she enters the temple, she who herself is the immaculate temple (PG 98, 293A); she is an undefiled book copied not by hand but by the Spirit who was writing in gold (col. 293B); the gates of the temple are flung open in order to admit her, the intelligible gate of God (col. 300A); she enters the doors (πρόθυρα) of the bema, she who destroyed the doors of death (col. 301D). The structure of many of these images is identical: paradoxically Mary comes in contact with a material object while at the same time she is the metaphorical materialization of this object (temple, gate, door); the material and the supernatural are merged in her person. Germanos' symbolism (both in his homilies and in the *Ecclesiastical History*) is a momentous esthetic principle; his symbols unify the intelligible, supernatural world and the world of material things, thus revealing the sublime meaning hidden within plain objects around us. This merging of the intelligible and the material creates a paradox (the term is used in the homilies, for instance PG 98, 353A) as also, in its supreme form, is the distinction of the persons of the Trinity or the unity of humanity and divinity in the single nature of Christ (par. 41).

Another signal esthetic principle of the *Ecclesiastical History* is the interweaving of the past and future: since the material and the intelligible interpenetrate, the past can prefigure the future. Germanos quotes Maximos the Confessor saying that the spiritual

<sup>39</sup> See on the "philosophical poetics of pseudo-Dionysios" S. S. AVERINCEV, *Poetika ranne-vizantijskoj literatury*, Moscow 1977, 138-144. Cf. D. OLSTER, *Byzantine Hermeneutics after Iconoclasm*, *Byzantion* 64, 1994, 432.

salutation prefigures and portrays beforehand (προτυποῖ καὶ προδιαγράφει) the future faith. He then says that the closing of the doors materially points to (δηλοῖ) the future, that the profession of the divine symbol of faith presignifies (προσημαίνει, the word is not recorded in Lampe) the future mystical eucharist of the coming age (par. 41). Likewise, Germanos speaks of the preinitiated (προτελεσθέντα) mysteries of God that were realized in the Virgin (PG 98, 312C; cf. col. 304C, 309C), of the mystery revealed “before all ages” that found its realization in her (col. 317A).

Finally, the purpose of the Liturgy and, we may add, of literature (or at least of hymnography and homiletics) is not to observe but to participate in the process. The witnesses of the divine liturgy partake in life without death and share in the divine nature (par. 41), while in homilies emphasis is put on the audience’s participation in the celebration with a clear expectation of divine protection and help. Literature, according to Germanos’ **esthetic tenets, is not a passive reflection of reality but a deliberate and dynamic intervention into a reality that the faithful hopes to influence through prayer and praise.**

### E. Hymnos Akathistos

ed. C. A. TRYPANIS, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, Vienna 1968, 17-39;

Engl. tr. P. M. ADDISON, *Akathistos. Byzantine Hymn to the Mother of God*, Rome 1983

Some Latin manuscripts (one of them, Zurich, Zentralbibl. C.78, of the ninth century) contain a discourse on and a prose translation of the *Akathistos Hymnos*, attributing authorship to the patriarch Germanos and connecting the kontakion with the victory of Constantine V “Cavallinus” over the Muslims;<sup>40</sup> the attribution has not been backed by any evidence in Greek sources and remains questionable. Despite various attempts to date the *Akathistos* to the seventh century, most scholars prefer to see it as the work of Romanos the Melode or an anonymous poet of his time.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> P. VON WINTERFELD, Rhythmen und Sequenzenstudien, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 47, 1903, 73-88, cf. K. K[RUMBACHER], *BZ* 13, 1904, 620f. New edition of the Latin discourse by M. HUGLO, L’ancienne version latine de l’hymne Acathiste, *Le Muséon* 64, 1951, 27-61. On the authorship of Germanos *ibid.*, p. 53f. Cf. a self-critical note by P. MAAS, *BZ* 19, 1910, 605, who, after some hesitations, accepted the late date of the *Akathistos* despite his acknowledgment of similarities between the hymn and some passages of the fifth-century theologian Basil of Seleukeia.

<sup>41</sup> See a survey by C. A. TRYPANIS, *Fourteen Early Byzantine cantica*, Vienna 1968 [Wiener byzantinistische Studien VI], 17-27; cf. Th. DETORAKES, *Ὁ Ἀκάθιστος Ὕμνος καὶ τὰ προβλήματα του*, Athens 1993.

It seems unlikely that it will ever be possible to prove or disprove conclusively Germanos’ authorship of the *Akathistos Hymn*. A **lexicostatistical analysis of its vocabulary and rhythm** led K. Mitsakis to the firm conclusion that the hymn was the work of **Romanos the Melode**, and S. A. Sofroniou to the similarly firm conclusion that it could not be Romanos’ work and must have been written in the second half of the fifth century.<sup>42</sup> As for the content of the *Akathistos*, its second exordium indicates that it was produced after the Theotokos liberated her *polis* (i.e. Constantinople); that can refer either to the attack by the Avars and Persians in 626 or by the Arabs in 717/8 (as expressly stated by the Latin tradition)<sup>43</sup>. In order to sustain the view that Romanos or some other earlier author, was the creator of the hymn, the second exordium must be interpreted as an interpolation, a critical move that is not only risky in principle but also comes up against the difficulty of stanza 23, in which the author praises Mary as the indestructible rampart (a direct reference to a siege?) of the empire, who destroyed the enemy and triumphed over him. In stanza 21 Mary is characterized as the thunderbolt striking the enemy, and in strophe 9 she appears as the savior from the barbarian religion quenching the veneration of fire and teaching the Persians humility—a possible allusion to the Persian invasion. But we must take into account the fact that in Byzantine geographical terminology “Persians” could also designate Arabs,<sup>44</sup> while knowledge of the Muslim religion was confusingly obscure. If we believe (and most scholars do) the Latin attribution of the *Ecclesiastical History* to Germanos, why should we reject as impossible the Latin ninth-century identification of Germanos as the author of the *Akathistos*? As an hypothesis it is surely no worse than any other.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> K. MITSAKIS, A Linguistic Analysis of the Akathistos Hymn, *Kleronomia* 11, 1979, 253-262; under same title in *Byzantine Studies* 5, 1978, 177-185; cf. ID., Γλωσσική ανάλυση τοῦ Ἀκαθίστου Ὕμνου, *Diptycha* 1, 1979, 26-36; S. A. SOFRONIOU, Lexicostatistical Contribution to the Authorship of the Akathistos Hymnos, *EEBS* 35, 1966-67, 117-127.

<sup>43</sup> K. MITSAKIS, *Βυζαντινὴ ὑμνογραφία* I, Thessalonike 1971, 483-509, assumes that the *Akathistos*, a work of Romanos, was used by Germanos in connection with the events of 717/8.

<sup>44</sup> Thus Theophanes of Caesarea speaks of the Persian conquest of Asia in connection with the revolt of Thomas the Slav; J. M. FEATHERSTONE, The Praise of Theodore Graptos by Theophanes of Caesarea, *AB* 98, 1980, 130.30; Theoph., 425.23-25, applies the designation “Persis” to Khurasan, the central province of the Caliphate whereto Abu l’Abbas transferred his capital from Damascus. Cf. also below, p. 136.

<sup>45</sup> M. D. SPADARO, Sulla liturgia dell’Inno ‘Akathistos’: Quaestiones chronologicae, *La mariologia nella catechesi dei Padri*, Rome 1991, 247-264, questions the validity of the Latin tradition and concludes that the only secure information on the date of composition of the *Akathistos* is that it cannot have been written before 431 (the official introduction of the term Theotokos); she goes on to demonstrate, however, that the feast of the *Akathistos* was not established before the ninth century. J. VEREECKEN, L’Hymne Acathiste: icône chantée et mystère de l’incarnation en nombres, *Byzantion* 63, 1993, 360 n. 8, categorically denies the possibility of the attribution of the *Akathistos* to Germanos.



The *Akathistos Hymn* is a kontakion consisting of three prooemia (Trypanis rejects two of them as forgery on the strength of the observation that the oldest *Kontakaria* transmit only the first prooemium, but this statement contradicts his own list of manuscripts containing the second exordium: both the tenth-century Sinaiticus 925 [G] and several manuscripts of the tenth-eleventh centuries include it) and 24 stanzas (strophes) forming an alphabetical acrostic. The hymn begins with a short dialogue between Gabriel and Mary in which the archangel announces the wondrous paradox that is to happen, and the Virgin tries to grasp the sense of his message (γνώσιν ἄγνωστον γνῶναι) —the central theme of Germanos' Annunciation in which acrostics are also employed. Then various people in turn come to eulogize the Theotokos (shepherds, Chaldeans, Egyptians) until in stanza 13 "we" (the Christians) appear, "we" the Christians in general and, in stanza 23 the author himself in the singular: the Virgin is "my guiding light", and "the defence of my soul". The discourse moves from biblical personages to the Christian community at large to the author's individuality.

The kontakion is an elaborated *chairetismos*: 156 lines of the hymn begin with the greeting χαῖτε addressed to the Virgin. The motionless monotony that might have been created by these uniform acclamations (a "Gargantuan" anaphora!) is, however, alleviated by various literary techniques. First, the strophes alternate —only the odd stanzas are organized as chairetistic, and the even stanzas do not have χαῖτε. Second, the choice of epithets applied to the Virgin is usually determined by the character of people presented as eulogizing Mary: thus in stanza 7 the shepherds praise her as the mother of the Sheep and Shepherd (i.e. Christ), as the fold of rational sheep, as the defence against unseen beasts; in stanza 9 Chaldeans (notorious for their astrological interests) address Mary, and they call her the mother of the eternal Star and the dawn of the mystic day; Egyptians, in stanza 11, extol her in the imagery of Exodus (from Egypt) as the sea that swallowed the intelligible pharaoh and as one who distributed the manna; and, having ridiculed rhetoricians, who, in stanza 17, stand "mute as fish" before the Theotokos, the author makes "us" praise her as the vessel of wisdom, who debunked "the foolish philosophers" (φιλοσόφους ἄσόφους) and "illiterate literati" (τεχνολόγους ἄλόγους). Half rhymes (such as ἄκουσμα-καύχημα or παράβασις-παράδεισος) unite numerous pairs of consecutive lines.

The formal artistic means employed by the author aim to weave the smaller segments within the monotonous *chairetismos* into more forceful units that contrast with the compositional monotony; the sweeping anaphora is strengthened by assonance, inner parallelisms and paronomasia: the Virgin constitute the introduction to the miracles (θαυμάτων) of Christ and the main chapter of his tenets (δογμάτων) —the bookish words προοίμιον and κεφάλαιον terminate these parallel verses, and the rhyme is hidden within the lines. Then the Virgin is proclaimed a meadow (λεμῶν) of joy and, immediately following this, harbor (λιμήν) for souls; the author unites the barbarian (βάρβαρος) religion with the filth (βόρβρος) of [evil] actions, and he constructs a beautiful paronomasia: τῶν εἰδώλων τὸν δόλον (the treachery of idols). The assonances are neither identical nor banal —the sounds and the spelling vary, and the language is infused with life.

There is no need to stress here the sincerity of the author's veneration of Mary; much has been written about the theological views and emotions expressed in the *Akathistos*. As a work of literature the hymn deals with the problem which the anonymous hagiographer grappled with in the *Miracles of St. Artemios*, and Andrew of Crete in the *Megas Kanon*, and which was also to be taken up by Theophanes Confessor in a work of a completely different genre —the problem of how to reconcile the absolute unity of the text (the lack of motion) and the independence of the smaller components ("episodes") of which the allegedly monotonous text is built. Whoever may have been the author of the *Akathistos*, and whenever it was that he wrote his masterpiece, he gave a brilliant solution to the problem.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### JOHN DAMASKENOS

#### A. Biography (BHG 884-885m)

John ibn-Mansur (ὁ τοῦ Μανσοῦρ) of Damascus<sup>1</sup> is by far the most famous of the *literati* of the eighth century; hundreds of manuscripts containing his works have survived, yet we know very little about his life. Since Damaskenos was anathematized by Constantine V (741-75), and since in his treatise *On Iconoclasm* John mentions the exile of the blessed (μακάριος) patriarch Germanos (Kotter, *Schriften* III, 103= *Imag.* II, 12.27-29), it is certain that he was alive in the second quarter of the eighth century. If the word *makarios* means here “deceased” (this is a common usage, but there are alternatives), we may even be permitted to move the end of his life closer to the mid-eighth century. He evidently knew Andrew of Crete’s first sermon *On the Dormition*, which he quotes in the *Disputation with a Saracen* (*Schriften* IV, 436= *Sarac.* 9.3-6 from PG 97, 1052), and on several occasions he cites the patriarch Germanos (see Kotter’s index in *Schriften* III, 207). S. Vailhé placed John’s death in 749,<sup>2</sup> modern scholars prefer a more indefinite date, ca. 750-53. The year of 753 as the *terminus post quem non* is assumed since Damaskenos was condemned in

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<sup>1</sup> On John consult, firstly, the following general surveys: BARDENHEWER, *Altkirchliche Literatur* 5, 51-65; BECK, *Kirche*, 476-486; N. TOMADAKES, *Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν βυζαντινὴν φιλολογίαν*, Athens 1965, 210-216, 266-272; P. Th. CAMELOT, *Catholicisme* 6, 1964, 451-455; B. STUDER, *DSP* 8, 452-466 and *Id.*, *DizPatr* 2, 1559-1562. See also J. M. HOECK, *Stand und Aufgaben der Damaskenos-Forschung*, *OChP* 17, 1951, 5-60; J. NASRALLAH, *Saint Jean de Damas*, Harissa-Paris 1950; A. KALLIS, *Johannes von Damaskus, Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte: Alte Kirche* II, Stuttgart 1984, 289-300, and bibliography in: A. KALLIS, *Handapparat zum Johannes-Damaskenos-Studium*, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 16, 1967, 200-213.

<sup>2</sup> S. VAILHÉ, *Date de la mort de saint Jean Damascène*, *EO* 9, 1906, 28-30.

Constantinople, at the Council in Hiereia in February 754, but it is impossible to prove incontrovertibly that he was condemned posthumously.

On the other hand, J. Nasrallah and J. M. Hoeck assume that he was a companion of the future caliph Yazid (born between 642 and 647). This assumption, however, is at variance with the evidence that Damaskenos was ordained a priest by John, Patriarch of Jerusalem (705-35), and it is somewhat unlikely that he began his ecclesiastical career at the age of approximately sixty. He must have been born ca. 675 or even later.

When proclaimed a saint, Damaskenos came to find some pious biographers; several *vitae* are extant in Greek, and some in Arabic and Georgian. The relation between them has not yet been clarified. The earliest manuscripts of the Greek *vitae* are of the tenth century, and the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* has entries on him. One of the Greek *vitae* (the so-called Jerusalem biography composed by a certain John of Jerusalem or of Antioch, according to different traditions) refers to an Arabic original which the hagiographer allegedly used. Hoeck suggested that this Arabic original has been lost but was a work by Theodore Abu-Qurra (d. ca. 820-25), and therefore of the ninth century. There is no data, however, to support such a hypothesis.

The Arabic *vita* does in fact exist and is actually very close to the Jerusalem biography. In the prologue it is said that it was written by the monk and priest Michael after 1084. The confusion becomes even greater due to the preface of Ephrem Mcire (the Minor) to his Georgian translation produced at the very end of the eleventh century. According to Mcire, the Arabic *vita* of Damaskenos was translated into Greek by a certain Samuel of Adana (not John of Jerusalem or Antioch!), and it was this translation that Mcire used for his work. Mcire's Georgian text is almost identical with the Arabic version of Michael and accordingly close to the Greek Jerusalem version. Thus if we are to believe Michael and Mcire, there must have existed two identical Arabic *vitae* and two independent Greek translations —by Samuel and by John. Later, the Jerusalem biography was elaborated by John Merkouropoulos, Patriarch of Jerusalem in the twelfth century (BHG 395), himself an enigmatic figure. Hoeck, as did some of his predecessors, considered the Jerusalem redaction the oldest Greek version, but M. Gordillo conjectured that the so-called Marcian version was primary;<sup>3</sup> it seems to be closer to the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*. Other versions are also known, some of which combine Damaskenos' biography with that of Kosmas of Jerusalem (we will return to these below, p. 108-110).

John's biographies are poor in factual information and contain much that is legendary (we read, for instance, of how an arm of Damaskenos was cut off by order of a caliph, but in answer to his prayer, the Mother of God stepped out of the frame of her icon and put the severed limb back into its place<sup>4</sup>). We can establish only a few stages in the life of the saint: he was born in Damascus to an influential Christian family of Arab origin and he

<sup>3</sup> M. GORDILLO, *Damascenica*, *OrChr* 8, 1926, 62f.

<sup>4</sup> PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Analekta* IV, 324f.

served the Caliphate. According to his hagiographers, John was denounced as a militant Iconophile to the Byzantine emperor (Leo III or Constantine V?) and, then, was calumniated by the emperor to the caliph; he was, thus, forced to leave his office and became a monk and priest in Mar Saba, remaining an active opponent of the iconoclast policy of Leo III (and Constantine V?). He was a prolific author: besides dogmatic and polemical works of purely theological character (including a polemic against Islam<sup>5</sup>), he left a legacy of homilies and hymns. Unfortunately, the authorship of many works ascribed to him remains questionable: we have already mentioned (above, p. 28) that the *Vita of St. Artemios* is attributed to him as well as to an unknown John of Rhodes, and it is often difficult to distinguish among John Damaskenos, John the Monk, John Sabaite and John of the Ancient Laura, whose names appear on the titles of various sermons and poems.

### B. Source of Knowledge: Systematic theology

a. *Dialectica*: ed. KOTTER, *Schriften* I, 47-146, b. *Liber de haeresibus*: ed. KOTTER, *Schriften* IV, 19-67, c. *Expositio fidei*: ed. KOTTER, *Schriften* II.

Damaskenos' fame is connected more with his role as a theologian and philosopher than as an author of literary works. At the end of the thirteenth century, John Bekkos, Patriarch of Constantinople, declared that Damaskenos "had filled up the whole world with his theology" (PG 141, 320A). His *Source of Knowledge* was, probably, the most popular Byzantine treatise on theological questions.<sup>6</sup> John Damaskenos lived in the Caliphate, but was closely bound to Byzantine culture not only by the language and scope of his interests, but by his direct involvement in the theological and cultural life of the empire. He was an active polemicist: from the relative tranquillity of his monastic life he was ready to wage war on heretical opinions that contradicted Christian truth as he understood and formulated it.

<sup>5</sup> Besides KOTTER's, *Schriften*, there is an edition by R. LE COZ, *Jean Damascène, Écrits sur l'Islam*, Paris 1992. See Germ. tr. by R. GLEI-A. KHURI, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abû Qurra, Schriften zum Islam*, Würzburg 1995. Much has been written on Damaskenos' attitude toward Islam, see for instance S. BROCK, Syriac Views of Emergent Islam, in: G. H. A. JUYNBILL, *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, Carbindale-Edwardsville 1982, 19; D. SAHAS, The Arab Character of the Christian Disputation with Islam. The case of John of Damascus, *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden 1992, 185-205.

<sup>6</sup> For a list of manuscripts containing his *Source of Knowledge* see B. KOTTER, *Die Überlieferung der Pege gnoseos des hl. Johannes von Damaskos*, Ettal 1959, 6-92. Later, KOTTER, *Schriften* II, XXX-XLIII, counted 252 manuscripts of the *Source*.

A century divides Damaskenos from Maximos the Confessor, the last great thinker of the patristic age. The anthropocentric theology of Maximos is a highly personal, human poetry: the ultimate goal of creation is the deification of man, his ascent to God, made possible by the existence of the perfect human nature in Christ. This idea explains Maximos' unswerving opposition to Monotheletism: he could not accept the idea of depriving Christ of perfect human will and energy, a move which, in his opinion would have resulted in damaging the order (*oikonomia*) of salvation and deification. He paid heavily for his ideological non-conformity: after painful interrogations, the emperor exiled him to Thrace and then to Lazica, where he died some time after 662.

In the generation between Maximos and Damaskenos only one scholar left a significant mark on Byzantine theology: Anastasios of Sinai,<sup>7</sup> a saint like Maximos and Damaskenos, of the Byzantine church. His life is shrouded in enigmas, and distinguishing him from other writers of the same name is not always easy. It is generally believed that Anastasios died ca. 700, but also that the peak of his activities was in the 630s, a chronological framework which, while not totally impossible, can hardly be expected to convince many.

Anastasios spent most of his mature life within the territory conquered by the Arabs, but unlike Damaskenos he turned away from Byzantium and dealt with local interests, predominantly the "heresies" of the Monophysites and Monothelites and the problems of Christian discipline under the yoke of the infidel. His *Guidebook* (*Hodegos*) consists of chapters arranged in somewhat haphazard sequence (dogma, polemic, and church history), with many repetitions (*tautologiai*, as he calls them in the epilogue —chap. 24.124), so that he discusses Severus of Antioch or the Gaianitai in different parts of the book. Some chapters are structured like a dialogue (disputes between an Orthodox and a heretic), some are purely auctorial, some, in the fashion of a florilegium, include copious patristic quotations. The structure of the *Questions and Answers* (*Erotapokriseis*) seems even

<sup>7</sup> The main work of Anastasios is the *Guidebook* (*Hodegos*) published in a critical edition by K. H. UTHEMANN, *Viae dux*, Turnhout-Louvain 1981; the *Questions and Answers* (*Erotapokriseis*) is very probably his work, and at any rate was compiled in his time. On it see M. RICHARD, *Opera minora* III, Turnhout-Louvain 1977, nos. 63-64. Few homilies have survived, but they include two dealing with the creation of man; cf. K. H. UTHEMANN, *Sermones duo in constitutionem hominis secundum imaginem Dei*, Turnhout-Louvain 1985 [Corpus Christianorum. Series graeca 12]. Of this *œuvre*, *Erotapokriseis* has attracted the greatest attention of historians; see G. DAGRON, *Le saint, le savant, l'astrologue: étude de thème hagiographiques à travers quelques recueils de 'Questions et réponses' des Ve-VIIe siècles*, *Hagiographie, culture et société*, Paris 1981, repr. in ID., *La Romanité chrétienne en Orient*, London 1984, pt. IV, 143-155; J. HALDON, *The Works of Anastasios of Sinai, The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* 1, Princeton NJ 1992, 107-147; P. SPECK, *Das Teufelschloß. Bilderverehrung bei Anastasios Sinaites?*, *Varia* 5, Bonn 1994 [Poikila byzantina 13], 293-315; M. BIBIKOV, *Rannesrednevekovo vostočnokristskoe obrazovanie v 'Voprosah i otvetah' Anastasija Sinaita, Evropejskaja pedagogika ot antičnosti do novogo vremeni* 1, Moscow 1993, 121-126 and ID., *Biblejskie sjužety v vizantijskikh, drevneslavjanskikh i drugih versijah florilegija Anastasija Sinaita, Slavjane i ih sosedi* 5, 1994, 26-43.

looser: Anastasios explains biblical expressions, discourses on the relations of Christians with Jews, Samaritans and Muslims, touches upon natural phenomena, fornication and the role of Satan in the spread of heresies. In the *Guidebook* Anastasios complains that he was writing in the desert, that his illness and the lack of books (he allegedly cited numerous authors by memory) made his work difficult. But these obstacles are not enough to explain the inconsistencies of his composition: whether the works that survived under his name were indeed authored by a single writer or in fact by different theologians of the seventh century, the lack of compositional structure was a trend of the time rather than the individual feature of a man scribbling in a remote corner of the Hellenic world.

Damaskenos seems to have known the *Guidebook* of Anastasios, as pointed out by B. Kotter in respect of several passages in the *Source of Knowledge* and in the treatise *Against the Jacobites* which coincide with formulas of the *Hodegos* (*Schriften* II, 248f. and IV, 445). But Damaskenos' methodology of analysis and presentation is a negation rather than the continuation of the basic principles of the *Hodegos*.

In the preamble of *Dialectics*, first part of the *Source*, John announces the structure of his trilogy. In the first part the best material collected from "the [ancient] Greek wise men" is presented; subsequently, a comprehensive list of the heresies is given, and, finally, the work culminates with the divine truth as spoken by the Prophets, the "God-taught fishermen" and the "God-bearing pastors and teachers" (*Schriften* I, *Dial.* proem. l. 43-60). Thus, he claims, his treatise contains nothing original (*ἐγὼ δὲ ἐμὸν μὲν, ὡς ἔφην, οὐδέν*, *ibid.*, l. 60 and par. 2.9-10). This statement is something more than a topos of humility and modesty. John was, first of all, a man of methodical mind, who consciously viewed himself as an heir to the great fathers of the late Roman period and whose aim was to ensure that things be put in the order that had already been established (in this way he was a forerunner of ninth- and tenth-century "encyclopedists").

The great florilegium (a collection of quotations from authorities) conventionally called the *Sacra parallela* (the Greek title *Ἱερὰ παράλληλα*) and attributed by the manuscript tradition to John Damaskenos<sup>8</sup> already shows the difference in the approaches of Anastasios and John: unlike the *Erotapokriseis*-genre, the *Sacra parallela* was rigidly structured. The great florilegium comprises three books: the first on God, the second on man, and the third on vices and virtues; the material of the first two books is treated alphabetically, whereas the vices and virtues of the third book are presented in contrasting

<sup>8</sup> The authorship of Damaskenos was questioned by F. LOOFS, *Studien über die dem Johannes von Damaskus zugeschriebenen Parallelen*, Halle 1892, and later by J. HOECK. However, M. RICHARD, *Florilèges spirituels grecs*, DSp 5, fasc. 33-34, col. 476f., repr. as *Florilèges grecs*, in ID., *Opera minora* I, Turnhout-Leuven 1976, no. 1, col. 476f.; cf. ID., *Les 'Parallela' de saint Jean Damascène, Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines (Ochride, 14-21 septembre 1961)* 2, Belgrade 1964, 485 n. 1, rejects HOECK's arguments. O. WAHL, *Die Prophetenzitate der Sacra parallela in ihrem Verhältnis zur Septuaginta-Textüberlieferung* 1, Munich 1965, 48f. (cf. ID., *Der Proverbien- und Kohelet-Text der Sacra parallela*, Würzburg 1985 [Forschung zur Bibel 51], 13) is very cautious but tends to concur with Richard.

pairs. The wealth of citations from the fathers here vastly surpasses the data available to Anastasios. Even clearer is the coherence of the presentation in the *Source of Knowledge*. In the *Dialectics* John provides a series of abstract philosophical definitions, based on the ancient Greek thought, namely Aristotle: on the aim, on the philosophy, on the similarities and differences between the species, considered as being by nature, and the accident, considered as being by position. In the second part of the *Source*, the *De hearesibus*, John considers first the four main deviations from the true religion: barbarian [paganism], scythian [paganism], hellenism and judaism. Then, he establishes a list of heresies within Christianity following the chronological order of their appearance. The last part of the *Source*, the *Expositio Fidei*, is structured according to a strictly logical plan: beginning from the definition of God and celestial beings, Damaskenos moves to the creation, the earth, the man and his emotions; he then goes on to interpret the relations between the human and divine, such as Providence and the economy of salvation. This section is logically followed by the construct of the consubstantial Trinity and of Christ as a perfect God and a perfect man—the construct that explains the economy of salvation. The next sections are devoted to worship (the cross, icons, sacraments, the Scriptures) and ethics, the author at last concluding with chapters on the Antichrist and resurrection.<sup>9</sup>

We have to see now to what extent, and how these principles of rigid composition, of systematic theology were reflected in the homilies and hymns of John Damaskenos as well as in his literary esthetics.

### C. The Virgin Mary (CPG 8061-8063, BHG 1114, 1097, 1089)

Ed. KOTTER, *Schriften* V, 1988, 461-555

Much has been written on the Mariology of John Damaskenos,<sup>10</sup> M. Jugie, for example, juxtaposing John's homilies with those of Andrew and Germanos (in his view, John was

<sup>9</sup> This is not the place to analyze the substance of Damaskenos' theology. See firstly B. STUDER, *Die theologische Arbeitsweise des Johannes von Damaskus*, Ettal 1956, and A. SICLARI, Il pensiero filosofico di Giovanni di Damasco nella critica, *Aevum* 51, 1977, 349-383. Nor is it important for our purposes that his philosophy was strongly dependent on the teaching of earlier fathers, as F. R. GUNBAUER, Die Anthropologie des Johannes von Damaskos, *Theologie und Philosophie* 69, 1994, 1-21, emphasized.

<sup>10</sup> C. CHEVALIER, *La mariologie de saint Jean Damascène*, Rome 1936 [OrChAn 109]; V. GRUMEL, La mariologie de saint Jean Damascène, *EO* 36, 1937, 318-346; JUGIE, *Mort et Assomption*, 245-250; B. ANAGNOSTOPOULOS, Ἡ περὶ τῆς Θεοτόκου διδασκαλία τοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ, *Eucharisterion. Timetikos tomos A. S. Alibizatou*, Athens 1958, 570-578; V. FAZZO, La mariologia di san Giovanni Damasceno, *La mariologia nella catechesi dei Padri*, Rome 1991, 129-137.

closer in style to Germanos). There is no need to stress that Damaskenos uses "enthusiastic expressions praising the excellency and extraordinariness of the Mother of God" (V. Fazzo's rendering). Certainly, he revered Mary, and in particular he applied to her the epithet *theopais* (*Dorm.* I, par. 7.3) used by both his predecessors. There is, however, a certain "quantitative" difference between Damaskenos' attitude toward the Theotokos and that of the former Monothelites. We have seen that the Virgin held the place of honor in the homiletics of Andrew and Germanos—this is not the case with John. In the fifth volume of John's *corpus* as published in a critical edition by B. Kotter, there are seven genuine non-Marial sermons (on festive days, on biblical passages, on saints and on Christ [Nativity and Transfiguration]) and only one work on the Virgin (a trilogy *On the Dormition*). Another homily, *On Mary's Nativity* (CPG 8060, BHG 1087), is, according to Kotter, spurious: he underlines the distinction between this and the genuine works of Damaskenos with regard to both language and the system of images and similes employed.

In Damaskenos' own words the trilogy *On the Dormition* was commissioned (κελεύματα) by the best and τῷ Θεῷ προσημένιστατοι (right-minded, "orthodox"?) pastors (*Dorm.* II, 1.7-9), and was delivered at a "congregation", which he describes as a sacred and divine σύστημα (*Dorm.* III, 1.5-6), a *systema* eager to listen to the divine words (*Dorm.* II, 1.18). Kotter suggests that the sermons refer to the celebration of Mary's Dormition on August 15th, and that at the time of their composition Damaskenos was in old age:<sup>11</sup> "In [my] winter I bring to the Queen the flowers of [my] words and the maturity of [my] speech" (*Dorm.* II, 1.30).

The three sermons are disproportional: the first occupies eighteen pages of Kotter's edition, the second twenty-five, and the third only eight. Yet another aspect of the sermons is worth mentioning: in the preface to the first homily, Damaskenos describes a scene where some peasants meet with the *basileus*, who swaggers around in his purple robes, shining in his crown and surrounded by a multitude of bodyguards (*Dorm.* I, 2.13-15). The scene is further developed in the preamble to the second homily. Here John describes the emperor, whom God entrusted to rule over the people: the king is sitting at the lavish table while a man brings him a violet out of season, whose color resembles the royal purple, a rose or a "sweet produce of a fruit-tree", and the emperor rewards the peasant by giving him generous gifts (*Dorm.* II, 1.20-29). It is clear that Damaskenos uses an imagery rather common in edifying texts. It would not be unjustified, however, if we assume that the trilogy was produced if not for Constantinople at least within a constantinopolitan context.

This hypothesis is lent a degree of support in the so-called *Historia Euthymiaca*, forming chapter 18 of the second homily. This text, describing the church of Blachernae in the capital and the *translatio* of the relics of the Theotokos from Jerusalem to Constantinople, is held by scholarly consensus to be an interpolation that interrupts the logic of the speech on Mary's tomb, and in fact it is known also from an isolated synaxarial

<sup>11</sup> KOTTER, *Schriften* V, 464.



entry as well as from a *codex vetustissimus* (Sinait. 491, 8th-9th c.) and from Kosmas Vestitor.<sup>12</sup> The manuscript tradition of Damaskenos' sermon, however, does not support the idea of an interpolation; even if the legend had existed before John pronounced his homily there is no evidence that it was inserted by somebody else into his text. If we assume, following the manuscript tradition, that the *Historia euthymiaca* was an authentic part of the trilogy and that the trilogy was somehow connected with the relations between Jerusalem and Constantinople, the imagery of the emperor in brilliant royal garb appears to fit the overall context.

The third homily has none of the "historical" material (Mary's preparation for death and the gathering of the apostles) which we have in the corresponding sermon by Germanos; only in passing does Damaskenos say that the apostles were merely physically present to the Virgin's funeral, while the incorporeal and invisible angels ministered the mother of their Lord (par. 4.35-38). The scene portrayed is not that of a "naturalistic" funeral, but the metaphysical transfer of the Mother of the Word from the earthly to the heavenly Jerusalem. Seemingly paradoxical is the statement that the grave is more beautiful than Eden, more precious than the tabernacle (of Moses), more fortunate than the Ark—but the paradox is resolved in the last paragraph where Mary is proclaimed "the workshop of our salvation". The author finishes by sending "sacred hymns" to "the Son of thy glory".

The third homily (John expressly calls it such [par. 5.24], demonstrating that the three formed a unity) is an epilogue to the trilogy rather than an independent sermon. The two preceding homilies, however, are also poor in "historical" narrative. The first homily contains a long exordium whose purpose is to justify the eulogy addressed to the Virgin: the Hellenes praised their dead, adorning their speeches with myths and falsehood; how, therefore, can we let the true and holy exploits be buried into the depths of the silence? John terminates the exordium with the formula: "We begin to narrate" (*Dorm. I*, 4.31-32). But the narration is extremely thin: a few words on Ioakeim and Anna, the Annunciation, and the apostles who accompanied Mary to her grave. The main part of the discourse is taken up by the laudation of the Mother of God (interrupted by the image of Jacob's ladder [*Dorm. I*, 8.43-51] in the same manner as the insertion of the *Historia euthymiaca* in *Dorm. II*), by contemplating the mystery of death that is but another birth, and the metaphysical ascent of the Mother to the treasury of the King. In *Dorm. I*, as in *Dorm. III*, angels rather than apostles play the leading role in the funeral, whereas apostles and the whole church are present, singing divine hymns. The second homily is also poor in

<sup>12</sup> M. JUGIE, Le récit de l'Histoire euthymiaque sur la mort et l'Assomption de la Vierge, *EO* 25, 1926, 385-392, and ID., *Mort et Assomption*, 159-167. Cf. A. WENGER, *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VI<sup>e</sup> au Xe siècle*, Paris 1955 [AOC 5], 137f.; M. VAN ESBROECK, Le témoin indirect de l'Histoire euthymiaque dans une lecture arabe pour l'Assomption, *Parole d'Orient* 6-7, 1975-76, repr. in ID., *Aux origines de la Dormition de la Vierge*, Aldershot 1995, pt. VII, 480-483. This idea was accepted by KOTTER, *Schriften V*, 504f.

historicity. After a long preamble, Damaskenos deliberately moves to the event ("it seems to me proper to figure out and to give shape to the wonders [θεάματα] which have occurred", par. 4.1-3), but there are no "scenes" in the sermon, except for the story (borrowed from pseudo-John's Apocryphal Gospel) about the Jew who tried to drag the corpse onto the ground, but was paralyzed on the spot (par. 13). The apostles, drawn by the cloud to Jerusalem, lack not only individuality but even names, and the metaphysical approach dominates over the narrative: "I understood that all this notified how much the things of this life are fluid and lightweight, and brought in clear view the concealed mysteries of the future good" (par. 9.11-13).

The styles of Germanos and Damaskenos can be distinguished by their theological and linguistic differences. Germanos' narration is "historical", focused on the image of a simple girl and loving mother who was set in an extraordinary situation and adjusted perfectly to it; John, a scholar rather than littérateur, deals primarily with the metaphysical aspect of the pair Annunciation-Dormition. He seeks to explain (see the verb ἐξημενύεται—*Dorm. I*, 5.21, 7.15-16) both the names and the hidden mysteries; he likes long prefaces, and marks clearly the transition from one compositional unit to another. Further, John ignores the distinction between scholarly and literary discourse, and he describes the Annunciation in virtually the same terms in both the trilogy (*Dorm. I*, 7) and in the *Source of Knowledge (Expos. fidei)*, par. 46.3-15). Of the kanons of John Damaskenos published by Christ and Paranikas only one is devoted to the Theotokos, namely *On the Dormition*.<sup>13</sup> Like the trilogy (only more so) the canon is devoid of "historical" elements, and when the divine apostles are introduced it is not to carry the Virgin to her grave, but to leap rejoicing, side by side with the exulting hills; "today", so Damaskenos explains, "is the feast of the Mother of God" (l. 106-108).

The hermeneutic, as opposed to the narrative or descriptive approach, is typical of another sermon by John, that *On the fig-tree and the vineyard* (*Schriften V*, 91-110; CPG 8058, on the theme of *Matth.* 21.18-22 and 33-41). Again, John begins with a scholarly exordium (par. 1-2), interpreting the mystery of the incarnation and the profundity of the divine love of mankind. Then he turns to the biblical parables, expounding their meaning. The text, he says, intimates (παραβολικῶς αἰνίττεται [par. 3.3-4], διὰ τῶν παραβολῶν αἰνιττόμενος [par. 5.1]) a deeper meaning: the fig-tree, for instance, specifies "the nature of mankind" (par. 3.11-12). The parable, according to John, is more than a literary form, more than a reflection or summary of reality; it shapes reality—Christ not only teaches by parables, he effectuates them (par. 3.9-10, 4.1). After a short comment on the parables (par. 3-5), Damaskenos draws moral conclusions and instructs the "people of Christ" to avoid "the acts of the Devil" and to follow the way prescribed by Christ. Here, as in the trilogy,

<sup>13</sup> CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm.*, 229-232. A homily thematically coupled with a hymn is also that *On the Transfiguration*, KOTTER, *Schriften V*, 436-459; see the canon *On the Transfiguration*, PG 96, 847-854.

indoctrination takes precedence over narration, the prologue and epilogue taking up more space than the stories themselves.

Is this indoctrination abstract and lifeless or is the orator dealing with a "realistic" situation? It is impossible to give a positive answer one way or the other. But it is probably notable that in the sermon, Christ, on entering the temple, finds there not hawkers and buyers, as stated in the Gospel (*Matth.* 21.12), but hierarchs, disparagingly called bad tillers of land and wolves in sheep's clothing (par. 4.2-5). This formula bridges the entrance into the temple with the second parable: the evil tillers of land, affirms John, had devoured the vineyard of the Lord, and He gave it to other peasants, to the apostles. Why does Damaskenos appear to despise the ἀρχιερεῖς so much and who are these hierarchs who replaced the biblical buyers and sellers? Although we know nothing about John's clashes with the Palestinian hierarchy, we do know about his struggle with the iconoclast hierarchy of the Byzantine capital. Is he perhaps suggesting that they are wolves in sheep's clothing?

*D. Popular culture and Damaskenos: the Enkomion for St. Barbara*  
(CPG 8065, BHG 217)

Ed. KOTTER, *Schriften* V, 1988, 247-278

H. Delehaye convincingly demonstrated that besides historical *martyria*, manifold tales were created which he calls *passions épiques*.<sup>14</sup> These were stories about the interrogation, ordeal and execution of holy men and women who, during the persecutions of Christians, declared their true faith and challenged the pagan authorities. All such stories describe similar minor characters (emperors and governors as judges, their retainers and soldiers, pious supporters of the martyrs, and so on), similar situations, tortures and miracles, and assume superficial freshness only by changing names. Paraphrasing Robert Graves, we may say that this variation of names and details kept the standardized tale "fresh and therefore true". Movie-goers and book-readers who are accustomed to the works of formulaic genre with their barely varying repetitions of plot and action will appreciate the comfortable familiarity and uniformity the Byzantines found in "epic passions".

The genre of "epic passions" was extremely popular, but it is difficult to evaluate its cultural role, in part because the stereotyped content makes it almost impossible to assess the *martyria* chronologically. Delehaye assumes that "epic passions" definitely existed in the sixth century and is inclined to believe that they may have existed as early as the fourth century. Be that as it may, at the time when Damaskenos was writing his *Enkomion* (or

<sup>14</sup> H. DELEHAYE, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, Brussels 1921, repr. 1962 [SHag 13B], 236-315.

*Martyrion*) for St. Barbara the genre must already have been in existence. The legend of St. Barbara survived in several Greek versions, as well as in Latin and Syriac redactions.<sup>15</sup>

Whatever the history of the text, Damaskenos had at his disposal an original version in which he found the main elements of his *Enkomion*: the traditional topic of interrogation and execution and a relatively rare episode describing the saint's confinement in a tower at the hands of a crude and heathen father.<sup>16</sup> W. Weyh pointed out that John added little to the story of the girl, but did not consider that the composition of the panegyric differed from that of the epic passion: John supplied it with a long preface and a long epilogue whose total length is virtually equal to that of the story itself, whereas the author of the original passio started, as it is common in *martyria*, *in medias res* with the reign of the lawless Maximian and the building of the tower.

It is difficult to say what it was that attracted the great theologian to an elementary legend from a vernacular milieu. Was it merely a desire to embellish the well-known tale with rhetorical flourishes, such as paronomasia (for instance, Barbara's refutation of silly and irksome [λήρους καὶ ὀχληρούς] words [par. 8.5-6]) and word-play (a fissure in the rock [πέτρα] enabled Barbara to escape her father, who is described as more cruel than stones [λίθων], and who became as stone [ἀπελιθοῦτο] and petrified [πετρώδης] from surprise [par. 10.4-7])? The writer would seem to refute this; for rhetoric, he says in a verbose concluding passage, is apt to praise the beauty of the body and the allure of the flesh (the sentence is itself a tautological rhetorical figure!), but will inevitably be destroyed by time, whereas Barbara made manifest the divine virtue of the soul (par. 21.5-24). Damaskenos emphasized more than his predecessor(s) the issue of conflict within the family, and the growth of the rose of piety from the thorns of paganism (par. 9.21-23). If in regular epic passions the interrogation and execution of the martyr are placed in the hands of an emperor or governor, in the *Martyrion of Barbara* it is Dioskoros, her father, who persecutes and kills her. The theme of the cruel father (par. 9.17-18, 14.1-10, 24-26) is reinforced by a reference to Christ's prophecy (*Matth.* 10.35) that the daughter will rise against her parents, and by the reference to Abraham who escaped the false faith of his forebears (par. 9.23-25). The theme of pious children versus impious parents may have reflected the real situation within the milieu of the Caliphate in which John was brought up, and the appeal to the saint for personal help in his struggle with passions (par. 23.10-

<sup>15</sup> Two anonymous passions (BHG 213-215) were published by J. VITEAU, *Passion des saints Écaterine et Pierre d'Alexandrie, Barbara et Anysia*, Paris 1897, 89-105 and A. WIRTH, *Danae in christlichen Legenden*, Vienna 1892, 105-111; and a palimpsest of the ninth century, by EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* I, 1936, 114-116. For an analysis of the *martyrion* see W. WEYH, *Die syrische Barbara-Legende*, Schweinfurt, Leipzig 1912. Cf. E. KARPATIOS, *Ἡ ἁγία μεγαλομάρτυς Βαρβάρα*, Athens 1925; S. GENNARO, *I cicli dei temi narrativi nei testi agiografici e nella 'Passio sanctae Barbarae'*, *Studi classici e cristiani offerti a F. Corsaro*, Catania 1994, 285-291.

<sup>16</sup> A parallel can be found in the *martyrion* of Christina of Tyre (BHG 301y-302b), a fragment of which survived in a papyrus of the fifth or sixth centuries; see M. NORSÄ, *Martirio di santa Cristina nel cod. Messin. 29*, *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 19, 1912, 316-327.



15) —relatively infrequent in his homilies— possibly indicates that personal experience may have partly inspired the enkomion.

It is easier to explain why Damaskenos was interested in the fate of another saint, John Chrysostom, and devoted an enkomion to him (*Schriften* V, 349-370; CPG 8064; BHG 879). Himself a John, and dubbed (in his day?) Chrysorrhoeas (almost Chrysostom), he knew well the works of the bishop of Constantinople and, probably, in the depth of his heart, aspired to imitate his illustrious predecessor. Nonetheless, there is nothing personal at the start of his prologue when Damaskenos underlines his own weakness as writer and extols his hero who made himself into a true Jerusalem and obtained fame in all four quarters. As usual, Damaskenos dwells on the doctrine of the Trinity as taught by Chrysostom, and clearly marks the end of the prologue by exclaiming: "Who will give me a sharp tongue" (par. 4.6) that is proper for the panegyric.

Although Damaskenos had at his disposal abundant material from which to compile a biography of Chrysostom (including the orator's writings and the original Palladios' *Dialogue* on the saint, together with its later revisions), the portrait he finally gives us is disappointing. He begins with a series of hyperbolic rhetorical questions ("Who is so great... Who is so clean... Who did surrender beforehand from the desire of money and property?", par. 5-7) and in conventional manner asserts that Chrysostom ignored everything earthly with which he was associated: the city of his origin, his kin and his noble blood, the brilliance of his intellect and his power (par. 7.10-14). Only with paragraph 8 does the proper narration begin, and it proceeds differently from the narrative in the *Enkomion of Barbara*: here Damaskenos is concrete, he lists names and dates, which he interrupts with a comparison with Moses, since Chrysostom also came to (the metaphorical) Egypt and led the people away from the tyranny of the pharaoh (par. 9.8-9). Chrysostom spent four years in the desert and then, having returned to his city, became a priest. These events have parallels in the biography of the author, but this may be coincidence and the facts could well have been gleaned from the sources. The stress on modesty (par. 12-13), however, is probably more personal, since the historical Chrysostom seems to have erred rather on the side of arrogance. The clash with "the lawless virago" (par. 14.12), namely the empress Eudoxia, marks the climax of the tale, followed by the saint's exile and death, and finally by the *translatio* of his relics to the capital. In a brief epilogue (par. 19.12-15), unusual for Damaskenos, he reiterates his complain about his stammering speech, an implicit contrast to the "sharp tongue" of his hero.

The portrait of the hero has little psychological or emotional depth. It is woven together from disparate epithets, hyperbole, biblical references, and stereotyped hagiographical virtues, such as modesty or generosity. Some characteristics, whose inclusion may be justified by their artistic quality, are, however, unusual for an enkomion. By way of "comparison in one point", Chrysostom is described as a "sound *trapezites*" (money-changer or money-lender): according to Damaskenos, Chrysostom always rejected (metaphorical) counterfeit coinage and relied upon "the imperial icon" stamped on the coin (a commonly used image on coins during the iconoclast reigns). The only more or less

individual feature of the portrait is Chrysostom's scholarship, presented as hermeneutical: the saint taught how to scrutinize the Scripture and to remove "the covering of the letter (τοῦ γράμματος τὸ προκάλυμμα)", revealing the beauty that lies below (par. 12.1-5).

### E. Hymnographer

In the words of C. A. Trypanis, John of Damascus is "the most celebrated representative of the canon".<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, unlike his homilies, now available in a definitive critical edition by B. Kotter, Damaskenos' poetry has not yet found a modern editor, and the problem of collection and attribution is far from solved. The authorship of some of his poems is confused; certain works of John Mauropous were ascribed to him;<sup>18</sup> it is very difficult to differentiate between Damaskenos and some other Johns;<sup>19</sup> and his role in the completion of the *Oktoechos* (*Book of the Eight Modes*) has been questioned.<sup>20</sup> What is even more important for our purposes is that already in the twelfth century Eustathios of Thessalonike rejected the view that Damaskenos was the creator of the *Pentecostal kanon*, attributing its authorship to an unknown John of Arklas, an illustrious man of letters according to Eustathios, but an obscure monk of Mar Saba, if we believe John Merkouropoulos, a twelfth-century biographer of John of Damascus.<sup>21</sup> Eustathios' rejection is based exclusively on the stylistic differences between the *Pentecostal kanon* and the other works of Damaskenos, in general a somewhat hazardous methodology, particularly in this case, since iambic hymnography was still in its infancy. On the other hand, the *Souda* attributes to Damaskenos various iambic kanons without supplying, however, specific titles, and Gregory of Corinth, Eustathios' predecessor, while commenting on the *Pentecostal hymn*,

<sup>17</sup> C. A. TRYPANIS, *Greek Poetry. From Homer to Seferis*, Chicago 1981, 440.

<sup>18</sup> J. HUSSEY, The Authorship of the *Sex hymni* attributed to St. John of Damascus, *JThSt* 47, 1946, 200-203.

<sup>19</sup> See lists of Damaskenos' hymns in FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 273f. and SZÖVÉRFY, *Hymnography* 2, 10-14.

<sup>20</sup> E. WERNER, The Origin of the Eight Modes of Music, in *Contributions to a Historical Study of Jewish Music*, New York 1976, 104-148.

<sup>21</sup> Eustathios: PG 136, 505-508; Merkouropoulos: PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Analekta* IV, 349.21-23. On Eustathios' commentary see S. RONCHEY, An Introduction to Eustathios' Exegesis in canonem iambicum, *DOP* 45, 1991, 149-158. See also EAD., L'Exegesis in canonem iambicum di Eustazio di Tessalonica, *Aevum* 59, 1985, 241-266 and EAD., Sulla datazione dell'Exegesis in canonem iambicum di Eustazio di Tessalonica, *Athenaeum* 74, 1986, 103-110, as well as P. CESARETTI, Eustathios' Commentary on the Pentecostal Hymn Ascribed to St. John Damascene, *Svenska comittén för Bysantinska studier. Bulletin* 5, 1987, 19-22.

expresses no reservations concerning its authorship.<sup>22</sup> At any rate, the kanon cannot be much younger than Damaskenos himself: its Syriac translation survived in a manuscript of 882.<sup>23</sup> S. Ronchey, who strongly rejects Damaskenos' authorship, accepts the possibility that the kanon was the work of an iconoclast poet, if we have understood correctly her statement about "the milieu of the Second Iconoclasm".<sup>24</sup> It goes without saying that this suggestion is highly conjectural.

On the basis of their rhythm, the kanons of Damaskenos (or the kanons attributed to Damaskenos) can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of kanons composed in the medieval rhythmic form that became traditional and in which every ode preserves the same rhythmic structure established by the first stanza (*heirmos*), while each *heirmos* starts a rhythmic pattern of its own, distinct from that of other odes. The second group includes iambic kanons assigned a classical (and uniform across the entire hymn) metrical pattern.<sup>25</sup>

Among John's "regular" kanons the *Easter Sunday Hymn* (the so-called *Golden Kanon*) was especially popular with the Byzantines, and has enjoyed the close attention of Byzantinists. A. Baumstark first expressed the view that the kanon contains specific topographical information indicating the course across Jerusalem of the procession with torches on the night of the Anastasis, and that Damaskenos composed it to accompany such a procession.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, the poet develops his description of the great feast within the context of two main thematic areas: the celebration of the mystical light and the fusion of Old Testament prophecy with evangelical revelation. Ode I is full of joy, manifesting from the very beginning the victory of light over the darkness of evil, and its key word is ἐπνίχιον, "triumphal song". Then John returns to Christ's tomb, stressing the mystical meaning of his death, "yesterday I was buried with Christ, today I rise with Him, and from the sacred grave gushes the fount of immortality." Ode IV underlines the sacrifice of the lamb and the resurrection of the sun of justice, God almighty. The topic of festivity reappears in Ode V accompanied by a new theme: Christ's compassion toward mankind. This theme dominates in Ode VI: Christ descended to Earth and by triumphing over the power of darkness led humanity to Paradise. The victory over death is celebrated

<sup>22</sup> F. MONTANA, I canoni giambici di Giovanni Damasceno per le feste di Natale, Teofania e Pentecoste nelle esegesi di Gregorio di Corinto, *Koinonia* 13, 1989, 31-49.

<sup>23</sup> Text and translation in: A. BAUMSTARK, Der jambische Pfingstkanon des Johannes von Damaskus in einer alten melchitisch-syrischen Übersetzung, *OrChr* 36, 1941, 205-223.

<sup>24</sup> RONCHEY, Introduction, 157.

<sup>25</sup> See Th. XYDES, *Οἱ ἱαμβικοὶ κανόνες τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ*, Athens 1948, and, from the view-point of a musicologist, E. JAMMERS, *Schrift, Ordnung, Gestalt*, Bern-Munich 1969, 195-256.

<sup>26</sup> A. BAUMSTARK, *Die Modestianischen und die Konstantinischen Bauten am Heiligen Grabe zu Jerusalem*, Paderborn 1915, 34-44. The text is in CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm*, 218-221. On the music of the kanon see E. JAMMERS, *Der Kanon des Johannes Damascenus für den Ostersonntag*, in P. WIRTH (ed.), *Polychronion. Festschrift F. Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, Heidelberg 1966, 266-286.

also in Ode VII, in which John introduces the unguent-bearing women who lamented Christ and then greeted the living God; they announce the "mystical Pascha", and thus allow the poet to return to the world of antitheses: "We celebrate the demise of death, the destruction of Hell," and "the shining night" of salvation, the eternal light coming out of the grave. Ode VIII concludes the presentation, returning to the initial theme of joy and celebration throughout the world, although the theologian cannot resist inserting a doctrinal statement in the final troparion: "The Father-Pantokrator, the Word and the Spirit, one nature in three *hypostaseis*." There are no *theotokia* in the individual odes, but Ode IX praises the Theotokos before eulogizing "the wisdom, word and power of God" on the day of His Kingdom that has no evening.

Strict logic and sequence of presentation, so typical of Damaskenos, is even more manifest in the (spurious?) iambic *Pentecostal kanon*.<sup>27</sup> Since the feast was devoted to the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, πνεῦμα (spirit) becomes the key word of the poem: in the first six odes it is present in each stanza with only two exceptions (*troparion* iii of Ode III and the *heirmos* of Ode VI), in the three final odes the frequency is lower: five *troparia* omit the word. The poet begins with the juxtaposition of Moses (a favorite figure of Damaskenos, but not only of Damaskenos) and Christ: Moses gave the Law to the "people", Christ to the apostles, i.e. to Christians. Ode III touches upon the marvelous birth of the Virgin by Anna, and immediately the poet reverts to sublime theology which he treats polemically: the Godhead (θεοαρχικωτάτη) is incomprehensible to illiterate sophists and ignorant people who are immersed in darkest night. After this relatively long exordium, the poet turns to the Pentecost proper (Ode IV): the King of kings sent His Spirit onto the apostles who worshipped "the Thrice-Shining substance", and the writer goes on to combine the theme of Moses and that of Pentecost (Ode V), and the splendid (lit. "in the form of light") children of the Church accept the Law coming from Sion, the grace of the Spirit. First the poet dwells on the effect of the Spirit on the apostles: their tongues are "sharpened", their speech approved (ἐπισφραγίζον, lit. "ratified") and therefore life-giving. Then, in Ode VI, the economy of salvation is expanded from the apostles to "us": Christ makes us desire a cleansing and imitate the apostles. Another distinctly Damascene feature, in Ode VII, is the eulogy on the Trinity in which the theologian contrasts the Trinity with the soulless (ἄψυχον) idol made of gold (χρυσότευκτον), and upbraids those foolish men who accuse the apostles of being irrationally (ἄφρονες) soaked in wine (οἰνότευκτον). Ode VIII focuses on the Pentecostal theme —Christ's words to the apostles— allowing the poet to conclude the ode with a eulogy on Christ, the light that

<sup>27</sup> CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm*, 213-217. Cf. F. MONTANA, Tre parafrasi anonime bizantine del canone giambico pentecostale attribuito a Giovanni Damasceno, *Koinonia* 17, 1993, 61-79; see also ID., Dal glossario all'esegesi. L'apparato ermeneutico al canone pentecostale attribuito a Giovanni Damasceno nel ms. Ottob. gr. 248, *Studi classici e orientali* 42, 1992, 147-164; A. THEODOROU, Ἐρμηνεία τοῦ ἱαμβικοῦ κανόνος τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς, *EETHSA* 29, 1994, 57-77.

shines of itself through His incarnation. The last ode is Marian, although *theotokia* are absent, as in the *Easter Kanon*.

Iambics were used in the eighth century, and we have seen that Andrew of Crete used iambics to formulate his personal and religious concerns. But was it possible to employ monotonous and archaic rhythms for liturgical purposes? The question acquires even more relevance if we take into consideration the language of the *Pentecostal Kanon*, replete with obsolete words and complex compounds, the most elaborate of which is ἀκτιστοσυμπλαστούργουσύνθρονος (Lampe: "uncreated fellow worker sharing the throne"), an epithet for the Holy Spirit.

Two other iambic kanons are attributed to Damaskenos: *On the Nativity of Christ* and *On Epiphany*. Here the author avoids eccentric compounds, or at least they are rarer and less affected than in the vocabulary of the *Pentecostal Kanon*. In the late tenth century St. Nilus of Rossano and St. Phantinos read the *Enkomion for the Holy Apostles* written by John of Damascus "in iambic and rhythmic verses."<sup>28</sup> The iambic kanons were obviously an experiment, and since the *Pentecostal kanon* was translated into Syriac and paraphrased in Greek, the experiment must have been earnest. Ultimately it was probably a failure—the iambic kanons were completely superseded by regular hymns. This experiment may seem a slight too playful for modern tastes, but we shall see that some Byzantine *literati*, if they so desired, could put their hand to even more playful styles.

Damaskenos' links with ancient poetry become even more clear when we take into consideration an account by Eustathios of Thessalonike, writing four centuries later. In his commentary on the *Pentecostal kanon*, Eustathios states that John Mansour (he was aware that this name refers to Damaskenos) compiled in Euripidean manner, a play (δράμα) about the "blessed Susannah" (PG 136, 508B). This drama is lost, but reading Eustathios' résumé we may surmise that it was not as "dramatic" as its classical models: its focal point seems not to have been the action of Susannah's misfortune—her being raped in a garden—but rather her lament on the event, in which she compares her fate to the failure of the *ur*-mother Eve in Paradise.

#### F. *Esthetics of the image: Speeches against the calumniators of icons*

Ed. KOTTER, *Schriften* III, 1975

Three defences of icon worship are unquestionably works of John of Damascus—unlike an *Opusculum* against the Iconoclasts and the speech against Constantine Kaballinos

<sup>28</sup> G. GIOVANELLI, *Bíos καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Νείλου τοῦ Νέου*, Grottaferrata 1972, 71.5-7.

(Constantine V) written by a certain John of Jerusalem, monk, priest, and former synkellos of the patriarch of Antioch, probably around 770.<sup>29</sup> Icons in the works of Damaskenos are approached from two angles, the first of which is purely theological, i.e. whether it is possible to worship the image of God, the Godhead being ineffable and the cult of idols having been prohibited by the Old Testament. The positive solution to this problem presupposes, firstly, a clear distinction between the idol as representation of the false gods and the icon, the image of the true Son of God, and, secondly, the argument that Christ is pictured on the icon in his *human*, not divine nature. The defenders of the cult of icons distinguished between the absolute worship of the Godhead and relative veneration of the image. As for the icons of Mary and the saints, such iconoclast objections had no argumentative force whatsoever, since, being saints, they did not possess divine nature and could therefore be pictured in material form.<sup>30</sup> The second angle concerns the impact of the icon on the beholder, in other words the esthetics of the image, and in developing this esthetics John of Damascus seems to prefigure aspects of modern post-structuralism.

Damaskenos defined the image (εἰκών) as a likeness which gives a figure to the represented object (εἰκονιζόμενον) (*Imag.* III, 16.2-3), also specified as the prototype (*Imag.* I, 9.3-6). The image and the prototype are not identical, and the image is not able to reflect fully and completely its prototype: thus the picture of a man may show the form of his body (τὸν χαρακτῆρα ἐκτυποῖ τοῦ σώματος) but cannot depict the qualities of his soul (*Imag.* III, 16.8-10). In other words, art does not have the power to reflect reality perfectly; while it resembles reality it is not equivalent to it in value or nature. At the same time, the image is not only a representation (reflection) of exterior form, but it also reveals and discloses (ἐκφαντορικὴ... δεικτική) a hidden meaning, the unseen, the events of the future or those which have occurred in a different place (par. 17.2-6). It is impossible, continues Damaskenos, to observe the nature of God, or of an angel, soul or demon, but we may nonetheless envisage (or imagine) them bodily (σωματικῶς), somehow transformed

<sup>29</sup> B. M. MELIORANSKIJ, *Georgij Kiprjanin i Ioann Ierusalimjanin, dva maloizvestnyh borca za pravoslavie v VIII veke*, St. Petersburg 1901, 88-102. The main argument put forward by Melioranskij is the low quality of the tract, unworthy of the pen of the great theologian. Cf. G. OSTROGORSKIJ, Soedinenie voprosa o sv. ikonah s hristologičeskoj dogmatikoj, *SemKond* 1, 1927, 35-48 and especially M.-F. AUZÉPY, L'Adversus Constantinum Caballinum et Jean de Jérusalem, *BS* 56, 1995, 323-338.

<sup>30</sup> Much has been written on the theology (ideology) of the cult of icons, e.g. G. OSTROGORSKIJ, Gnoseologičeskie osnovy vizantijskogo spora o sv. ikonah, *SemKond* 2, 1928, 47-51; L. W. BARNARD, *The Graeco-Roman and Oriental Background of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, Leiden 1974; J. A. MCGUCKIN, The Theology of Images and the Legitimation of Power in Eighth-Century Byzantium, *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 37, 1993, 39-58. On Damaskenos' teaching about icons, see H. MENGES, *Die Bilderlehre des hl. Johannes von Damaskus*, Münster 1938; M. BALADI, Les saintes images, leur nature et pouvoir d'après s. Jean Damascène, *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 1, 1951, 13-25; M. BARASCH, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*, New York, London 1992, 185-253; D. J. SAHAS, "Υλη καὶ φύσις in John of Damascus' 'Orations in Defence of the Icons', *Studia Patristica* 23, 1989, 66-73.



(shape/configuration) (ἐν σχηματισμῷ); and by so doing we acquire (spiritual) instruction and partial knowledge (par. 25.1-7).

Since images are more than mere representations, they have objective existence. They are pervasive, permeating the entire cosmos. The first kind of image is the natural (φυσική) likeness, the object being equal to another by nature and only then by position or imitation (par. 18.2-6). First and foremost a theologian, Damaskenos illustrates this statement (quoting the New Testament) by the example of the Son who is both a natural and accurate image ("icon") of the invisible Father. Yet even in this case the copy differs from the prototype: the Father is the unborn begetter; the Son is not. The second category of image is comprised of ideas (ἐννοιαί, in the Platonic sense) or predeterminations (προορισμοί, a term of pseudo-Dionysios [PG 3, 824C]), which pre-exist in the will of God and are to be realized in accordance with His plan (par. 19.1-12). The next type of image is the man himself, created in God's "image and likeness" (*Genes.* 1.26).

Referring to pseudo-Dionysios, Damaskenos describes the fourth kind of images, the icon proper: it represents structures, forms and images described in the Scriptures. Invisible and incorporeal in essence, these images may be presented in corporeal form in order to obtain at least a vague perception of God and angels, since we are unable to comprehend the incorporeal without forming for ourselves analogous visible constructs (*Imag.* III, par. 21.1-7). In the chapter on the fifth kind of images Damaskenos discusses the prefigurations as portraying beforehand the future: thus, the [bramble] bush, the rain on the fleece, the staff or the jar prefigure the Virgin (par. 22.2-4). The sixth kind of image refers to the memory of an event, which can be rendered in two ways: either by a visible representation or by the word as set down in a book (*Imag.* III, par. 23.7-12, cf. *Imag.* I, 13.1-10). Thus John clearly links esthetics of literature with esthetics of visual art, and in developing this idea he treats images as metaphors: the iconic representations faintly inform the beholder of the divine appearances, as for instance the Trinity is represented (εἰκονίζεσθαι) by the image of the sun, the light or the rays or of an ebullient source or of running water (*Imag.* III, 21.22-26). Finally, in treating of the sixth kind of image, John states that they may enable the beholder to make comparisons with persons or events of the past —not only biblical (for instance, his reference to Abraham in the *Martyrion of Barbara*) but also taken from secular history. Thus, the triumphal procession is both a manifestation, or clarification (φανέρωσις), and a representation (στηλογραφία) in the commemoration of a victory, while, looked at from the opposite angle, it is also a reminder of the shame of the defeated (*Imag.* III, par. 23.1-5, cf. *Homily* II, 11.25-31).

Being more than a mere representation the image enigmatically prefigures the future, as, for instance, the Ark, the staff and the jar prefigure the Virgin (*Homily* I, 12.1-3). By the image contemporaneity is bound up both with the past and the future and contributes to the concept of the unity of time and space. References to the biblical past so common in Byzantine texts (and often tedious to modern tastes) have more than literary value —they indicate that every historical phenomenon is a part of the great teleological plan conceived

and realized by the divine will, and the long lists of epithets and similes attached to the Mother of God or a saintly hero of a hagiographical legend have much the same function.

The image does also have a didactic function. We need images in order to gain at least partial knowledge of the Godhead and other invisible beings, and also to understand all that is concealed and to distinguish between good and evil (*Homily* III, 17.12-14).

Damaskenos' esthetics is presented in his treatises (apologies) on the icon in highly structured form. The text is separated into clearly defined sections: "First, what is the icon?... Second, what is the purpose or function of the icon?... Third, what are the different kinds of icon?" The last section itself is subdivided into several items: "The first kind of icon is natural... The second type of icon is the idea of the future [stored in the reason] of God." And so on and so forth. Here again we encounter the systematic approach of the great theologian.

The icon, or image, in the theory of esthetics elaborated by John is consistently rational: it does not seem to involve any element of entertainment, play or even emotion; the function of the image is to explain, to remind the beholder of the past and to predict (prefigure) the future. Not only is the Word (Logos-Son) the image of the Father, but the spoken/written word is the image of the world (as is the graphic representation); it has an intrinsic power, it heals, threatens, conquers and forebodes. Literature is a play (as iambic hymns could have been), but it is much more than a play: it constructs its own cosmos and leaves an impression on the so-called real world. "In the beginning was the Word."

### G. Some other homiletic writers

Besides Andrew, Germanos and John of Damascus, few minor authors of homilies are known from this period. Unfortunately, it is difficult to place them chronologically. Here we shall list them with brief annotations.

1. *Anastasios of Sinai* (see above, p. 78f.). Some homilies are attributed to him (CPG 7747-7755), even though the question of authorship is still unresolved. Among them are "literary" homilies such as the speech *On the Transfiguration*,<sup>31</sup> combining a biblical with a heortological theme, while the speeches *On the Creation of Man*<sup>32</sup> are theological tracts with a polemical color (refutation of Monotheletism).

2. *John of Euboea* (CPG 8135-8138). Nothing is known of his life except for the date of a sermon he delivered in 744. Since the bishopric of Euboea did not exist, it remains

<sup>31</sup> A. GUILLLOU, Le monastère de la Théotokos au Sinaï, *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 67, 1955, 230-258.

<sup>32</sup> *Anastasii Sinaitae Sermones duo in constitutionem hominis secundum imaginem Dei*, ed. K. H. UTHEMANN, Turnhout 1985 [Corpus Christianorum. Series graeca 12].

questionable whether he was a bishop in Euoia/Euaria, near Damascus (or Euroia in Epirus), or was not a bishop at all and simply originated from Euboea. He wrote several homilies on subjects from the New Testament, as well as the earliest known *Vita of St. Paraskeue*.<sup>33</sup> John's authorship of the so-called *Religious Dispute at the Court of the Sasanians* was rejected by E. Bratke, though Bratke did accept that John revised this "romance",<sup>34</sup> the origin of which he located in the fifth rather than sixth century.

3. *Kosmas Vestitor* (*magistros*, according to a late manuscript, probably by analogy with some tenth-century Kosmasēs-*magistroi*). The time of his life can be established only by circumstantial evidence. He seems to have used the patriarch Germanos' works, and his earliest manuscript is of the ninth-tenth centuries. Accordingly, Wenger places him between 750 and 850, most probably in the second half of the eighth century.<sup>35</sup> Nothing is known about Kosmas save that he was a *vestitor*, that is, a courtier. His work (CPG 8142-8163) encompasses several favorite themes. He wrote an *Enkomion* and a *Vita of John Chrysostom*,<sup>36</sup> five festal *Enkomia* on the *translatio* of Chrysostom's relics to Constantinople,<sup>37</sup> four sermons *On the Dormition of the Virgin* now surviving only in a Latin translation, and three panegyrics on Zacharias, John the Baptist's father.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> BHG 1420p. F. DÖLGER, Johannes 'von Euböia', *AB* 68, 1950, 5-26; F. HALKIN, La passion de sainte Parascève par Jean d'Eubée, in P. WIRTH (ed.), *Polychronion. Festschrift F. Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, Heidelberg 1966, 226-237.

<sup>34</sup> E. BRATKE, *Das sogenannte Religionsgespräch am Hof der Sasaniden*, Leipzig 1899 [TU 19], 3a, 97.

<sup>35</sup> A. WENGER, *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VI<sup>e</sup> au Xe siècle*, Paris 1955 [AOC 5], 153; cf. ID., Les homélies inédites de Cosmas Vestitor sur la Dormition, *REB* 11, 1953, 284-300.

<sup>36</sup> K. I. DYOBOUNIOTES, Κοσμάς Βεσιτίωρ, Ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἰωάννην τὸν Χρυσόστομον, *EEBS* 16, 1940, 148-155; F. HALKIN, *Douze récits byzantins sur saint Jean Chrysostome*, Brussels 1977 [SHag 60], 429-442.

<sup>37</sup> K. I. DYOBOUNIOTES, Κοσμά Βεσιτίωρος ἀνέκδοτα ἐγκώμια εἰς τὴν ἀνακομιδὴν τοῦ λειψάνου τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσσοστόμου, *EEBS* 2, 1925, 50-83. On the Latin translation of an *enkomion* see P. CHIESA, La traduzione latina del 'Sermo in reditu reliquiarum s. Iohannis Chrysostomi' di Cosma il Vestitore eseguita de Guarimpoto Grammatico, *Aevum* 63, 1989, 147-171.

<sup>38</sup> F. HALKIN, Zacharie, père de Jean Baptiste. Trois panégyriques par Cosmas Vestitor, *AB* 105, 1987, 251-263.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### BARLAAM AND IOASAPH

(BHG 224-224c, CPG 8120)

Ed. G. R. WOODWARD - H. MATTINGLY, *St. John Damascene: Barlaam and Ioasaph*, Cambridge Mass-London 1937, repr. 1967

#### A. Authorship

The voluminous *An Edifying Story from the Inner Land of the Ethiopians Including the Vita of the Famous and Blessed Barlaam and Ioasaph* was very popular in Byzantium; no less than 140 manuscripts of it have survived. This Christian version of the life of Buddha was popular outside Byzantium as well, with Latin, Slavic, and oriental versions extant, whose relation to one another is not always clear. The lemmata of various of the Greek manuscripts name different people as its author: cod. Paris. 1771 (15th c.) records Euthymios the Iberian (d. 1028), *hegoumenos* of the Great Lavra of St. Athanasios (sic!) on Mt. Athos,<sup>1</sup> cod. Marc. VII.47 (18th c.) the physician Peter Kasimates, cod. Escor. T-III-6 (11th c. ?) John Tabenisiotes. A considerable number of manuscripts attributes the text to John Damaskenos (his is the most common name on Latin manuscripts from the twelfth century on), but the majority of them ascribe the authorship to John of the monastery of St. Sabas (Mar-Saba) or to John of the monastery of Holy Sinai. Of all these candidates two

<sup>1</sup> He was a cofounder of the monastery of Iviron. Another Euthymios-manuscript is cod. Marc. VII.26; B. FONKIČ, O datirovke Venecianskogo [Cod. Marcianus gr. VII 26] i Parižskogo [Cod. Parisinus gr. 1771] spiskov grečeskoj versii 'Varlaama i Ioasafa', *Vizantijskie očerki* 3, 1977, 210-215, argued that its main text should be dated to the twelfth century, and that the lemma had been inserted in the fifteenth century.

were preferred by modern scholars as the most plausible: Euthymios the Iberian,<sup>2</sup> and Damaskenos.<sup>3</sup>

The view, based on two late manuscripts, that Euthymios was the author of the work is supported by evidence in both Georgian and Latin sources. The Latin source is a fourteenth-century manuscript (cod. Neapol. VIII B 10) according to which the compiler of the Latin *Barlaam* visited Constantinople in 1048/9, where a certain Leo supplied him with a Greek text translated by the monk Euthymios. The Georgian testimony is the so-called testament of John of Athos, Euthymios' father (d. ca. 1002), who established a list of his son's works. In one of the three extant manuscripts of the testament—that of Gelathi—Euthymios' translation of the *Barlaam* into Greek is mentioned, but there are reasons for considering this phrase as the interpolation of a copyist.<sup>4</sup> Thus these testimonies are late or interpolated and therefore not wholly reliable. Moreover, they contradict the manuscript tradition: at least four manuscripts can be assigned to the late tenth or early eleventh centuries and the most ancient dated copy was produced in 1021,<sup>5</sup> suggesting that the *Barlaam* was already well known by the end of the tenth century. No less hazardous is the claim that the Greek *Barlaam* was written in the style of Symeon Metaphrastes, typical of the late tenth century when Euthymios the Iberian began his literary career.<sup>6</sup> It hardly requires special study to show that among the vast heritage of the Metaphrastes there is not a single work resembling the *Barlaam*; what Metaphrastes bequeathed to us are relatively short revisions of *vitae* produced in different styles and not a Christian romance replete with theological tenets. This brings us back to a point which cannot be stressed too

<sup>2</sup> P. PEETERS, La première traduction latine de 'Barlaam et Joasaph' et son original grec, *AB* 49, 1931, 276-312. This view has been supported by most Georgian scholars and by many experts in the West, e.g. R. L. WOLFF, *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, *Harvard Theological Review* 32, 1939, 131-139; D. M. LANG, St. Euthymios the Georgian and the *Barlaam and Ioasaph* Romance, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London University) 17, 1955, 306-325; D. GIMARET, *Le livre de Bilawhar et Bûdâsf selon la version arabe ismaélienne*, Geneva-Paris 1971. See E. G. ŠINTIBIDZE, Novejšie trudy o proishozhdenii grečeskogo romana 'Varlaam i Ioasaf', *Kavkaz i Vizantijskaja* 2, 1980, 91-97.

<sup>3</sup> F. DÖLGER, *Der griechische Barlaam-Roman. Ein Werk des H. Johannes von Damaskos*, Ettal 1953. DÖLGER's view was accepted primarily by German scholarship, see for instance BECK, *Kirche*, 482, with the bold statement "ohne Zweifel"; a milder formulation appears in *Tusculum-Lexikon*, Munich 1982, 102.

<sup>4</sup> Some corrections of Peeters' analysis of this Georgian testimony can be found in G. GARITTE, Le témoignage de Georges l'Hagiorite sur l'origine du 'Barlaam' grec, *Le Muséon* 71, 1958, 57-63.

<sup>5</sup> B. L. FONKIČ, Un 'Barlaam et Joasaph' grec daté de 1021, *AB* 91, 1973, 13-20. Against the authorship of Euthymios: W. J. AERTS, Einige Überlegungen zur Sprache und Zeit der Abfassung des griechischen Romans 'Barlaam und Joasaph', *Die Begegnung des Westens mit Osten*, Sigmaringen 1993, 364, and especially R. VOLK, Urtext und Modifikationen des griechischen *Barlaam*-Romans, *BZ* 86-87, 1993-94, 460, whose analysis is based on the "proto-text" prepared for the new critical edition.

<sup>6</sup> T. BRÄM, in *Dictionnaire des philosophies antiques* 2, Paris 1994, 65 f.

greatly: stylistic similarity is not a reliable basis for dating a piece of Byzantine literature, and in any event the vocabulary of the *Barlaam* is much closer to that of Damaskenos than that of the Metaphrastes.

Administrative terminology in the *Barlaam* (scarce as it is) indicates not the eleventh century, but an earlier period. The term *spatharios* (par. 269) is applied in the text to a person exceedingly close to the prince, a rank characteristic of the eighth century (the future emperor Leo III received this title from Justinian II who, as Theoph., 391.10-11, puts it, held him as true friend—a situation which seems to correspond exactly to that of the *Barlaam*), but by the eleventh century the honour had been drastically devalued. On several occasions the author of the *Barlaam* mentions the *protosymboulos* of the king, his chief councilor (par. 136, 137, 203): the term was common in the eighth through tenth centuries and was an official designation of the caliph.<sup>7</sup> It could be transferred to the caliph's councilor: thus in a biography of Damaskenos we read that the ruler of the Saracens summoned John and appointed him *protosymboulos* (PG 94, 449B).

But if the author was not Euthymios the Iberian, is the work perhaps by John of Damascus? Michael of Antioch, the author of the Arabic *Vita of Damaskenos* written soon after 1084, names John as the author of the *Barlaam*. The main argument advanced by F. Dölger to support this hypothesis is the author's abundant borrowing of Damaskenos' expressions (they take up about ten percent of the entire text), an argument that was immediately questioned by B. Laourdas in his review of Dölger's book.<sup>8</sup> In fact, such a cento "patchwork" technique was well known to Greek *literati*—the *Paraphrase of St. John* attributed to Nonnos is a biblical cento based on the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnos. Nobody would suggest that the *Christus Patiens*, a Byzantine pastiche based on ancient tragedians, was a genuine work of Euripides. What Dölger so industriously demonstrated is that the *Barlaam* could not have been produced before Damaskenos and that H. Zotenberg was wrong in dating it to the first half of the seventh century.<sup>9</sup>

The majority of manuscript lemmata name not Damaskenos, but John of the monastery of St. Sabas (or —mistakenly?— of Sinai) as the author of the *Barlaam-romance*. Dölger in fact considers the two men to be one and the same person, but the

<sup>7</sup> F. DREXL, Byzantina II: Khalif = πρωτοσύμβουλος, *Bayerische Blätter für das Gymnasial-Schulwesen* 58, 1922, 27f. Cf. DÖLGER, *Der griechische Barlaam-Roman*, 47, n. 1.

<sup>8</sup> B. LAOURDAS, *EEBS* 24, 1955, 383f. See the rejoinder by DÖLGER, *BZ* 48, 1955, 215.

<sup>9</sup> H. ZOTENBERG, Notice sur le texte et les versions orientales du livre de Barlaam et Joasaphat, *Notices et extraits des mss de la Bibl. nat.* 28/1, 1887, 1-166. Zotenberg's view was developed by Š. NUCUBIDZE, *K proishozhdeniju grečeskogo romana 'Varlaam i Ioasaf'*, Tbilisi 1956, who attributed the original text to John Moschos, a theory rejected by P. DEVOS, Les origines du 'Barlaam et Joasaph' grec, *AB* 75, 1957, 83-104. H. PERI, *Der Religionsdisput der Barlaamlegende, ein Motiv abendländischer Dichtung*, Salamanca 1959, 21f., suggested a "multi-layer" theory: a monk (probably named John) compiled the original Greek story, that John Damaskenos revised it stylistically, and Euthymios the Iberian put the work into the form available now. See a review by B. KOTTER, *BZ* 54, 1961, 382-387.

identification of various Johns is dangerous; we cannot exclude the possibility that the work of an unknown John Sabaite was later attributed to the famous John Damaskenos, also a monk of Mar-Saba for a certain period of time. There are some passages in the *Barlaam* which are difficult to reconcile with Damaskenos' authorship. For example, a sentence in par. 265 reads: "And when, as saith Esau, he has given his neighbor a drink of turbid dregs..." As the editors note, the verse comes not from Isaiah but from *Habac.* 2.15, the only passage in the Old Testament to use the word θολερός. This sort of mistake, though not improbable, would be surprising in Damaskenos. At the beginning of the story (par. 3), the author deals with the location of India: "The so-called land of the Indians is vast and populous, lying far beyond Egypt. On its Egyptian side it is washed by seas and navigable gulfs, but on the mainland it approaches the borders of Persia." There is clearly some confusion about its location:<sup>10</sup> India is described as situated between Egypt and Persia. And this association of India with Egypt is not the result of mere accident: India is identified with Ethiopia both in the lemma (τῆς ἐνδοτέρας τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν χώρας) and in the preamble — "The edifying story that hath come to me, which devout men from the inner land of the Ethiopians, whom our tale calleth Indians, delivered unto me" (par. 3). John Damaskenos, on the other hand, did not confuse the Indians with the Ethiopians and clearly contrasted "the Indian Ganges" with the Nile "flowing down from Ethiopia to Egypt" (*Expos. fidei*, par. 23.38-39). It is hard to accept that these contradictory statements could come from the same pen.

Another point of difference concerns the problem of "fate", *heimarmene*. "Some deemed," explains Barlaam, "that everything moved by mere chance (αὐτομάτως), and taught that there was no Providence, since there was no master to govern. Others brought in fate (εἰμασμένη), and committed everything to the stars at birth. Others worship many evil deities subject to many passions" (par. 48). The concept of *heimarmene* is here positioned outside the Christian system of beliefs and connected with astrological superstitions. John Damaskenos, however, treats this problem differently: he emphasizes the active role of man who indeed is the cause of his own actions, especially base and unjust ones, and criticizes as wrong those theorists who considered the cause of everything to be either God or necessity (ἀνάγκη), or *heimarmene*, nature, chance, and accident. John introduces neither stars nor evil deities: what he rejects is not superstitions nor heathen ideas. These theories are wrong, he asserts, because the principles described by his opponents work on different levels of the universe: God's action has to do with essence and Providence (Damaskenos uses the term πρόνοια, while the author of the *Barlaam* refutes the concept of the ἀπρονοήτα (events destitute of Providence). Necessity directs the movement of things that ever keep to the same course; *heimarmene* rules the necessary

<sup>10</sup> On the confusion of the location of India/Ethiopia in the works of late Roman authors, see M. KORDOSES, 'Ἡ "Ἀλλή Ἰνδική" καὶ ἡ νῆσος "Διβούς" τοῦ Φιλοστοργίου', *Historikogeographica* 2, 1988, 167-178.

realization of the things it brings to pass (for fate itself implies necessity); and nature deals with birth, growth, destruction, with plants and animals, and so on (*Expos. fidei*, par. 39). For John the fallacy is not the concepts of *anage* or *heimarmene* (which he is ready to retain, with certain qualifications), but the omission of the active human role in life. The difference seems to be substantial.

Thus the authorship of Damaskenos does not seem very likely.<sup>11</sup> If John of Mar-Saba was distinct from Damaskenos, who was he? The name of John is too common for a convincing identification. Among bearers of this name there is John, a disciple of Stephen Sabaite, who later became bishop of the town of "Charachmobon". He frequented the *symbolos* and judge of Damascus and finally settled down "with us". "We benefited much from his tales," relates Leontios, Stephen's hagiographer, and he reproduces, among other novelettes, John's story about his encounter with an awful Ethiopian (a regular epithet applied to demons) on the way to the monastery of Choura.<sup>12</sup> Certainly, there is no proof that this disciple of Stephen, a monk of Mar-Saba, this teller of wondrous stories (at least one of which dealt with the "Ethiopian") "brought" (this is the word used in the lemma) to Jerusalem (or Mar-Saba) the legend about the pious hermit Barlaam and the prince Ioasaph who converted to Christianity. Another candidate to authorship is the hermit John, mentioned in the *Vita of Theodore of Edessa*, who narrated his journey "to the inner land of India" (par. 95, p. 101.21-22).<sup>13</sup>

If we assume that the author of the *Barlaam* was not Damaskenos, but another member of the community of St. Sabas, when could the work have been compiled? Theophanes says that the famous lavrae of St. Chariton and of St. Sabas were deserted by either 809 or 813.<sup>14</sup> If we take this statement at face value, John Sabaite must have written before this date. But can we be sure that the great work was created in Mar-Saba or in Jerusalem and not in Constantinople, in the milieu of Palestinian émigrés, as may well have been the case with the *Vita of Theodore of Edessa*? To sum up, we should stress that the complex issue of the authorship of the *Barlaam* is still far from solved.

<sup>11</sup> A. KAZHDAN, Where, when and by whom was the Greek Barlaam and Ioasaph not written, *Zu Alexander d. Gr. Festschrift G. Wirth* 2, Amsterdam 1988, 1187-1209, repr. in ID., *Authors and Texts in Byzantium*, Aldershot 1993, pt. IX.

<sup>12</sup> AASS July III, 518f.

<sup>13</sup> On this episode see PEETERS, La première traduction, 296-298.

<sup>14</sup> Theoph., 464.15-18 and 499.23-25; see C. MANGO, rev. of K. WEITZMANN, *The Miniatures of the Sacra Parallela*, Princeton 1979, in *Antiquaries Journal* 62, 1982, 162f.



### B. St. Barbara and Ioasaph

The question of the authorship of the legend (and that of its oriental sources: Indian, Syriac and possibly Arabic) has overshadowed the treatment of the tale itself as a work of literature.<sup>15</sup> We shall take for analysis the Greek *Barlaam* in the form that the tradition (more or less uniform) has preserved for us.<sup>16</sup> At the core of the story lies the conversion under the influence of the hermit Barlaam, of the Indian prince Ioasaph, son of the pagan king (*basileus*) Abenner, and the struggle of Abenner—who wanted his son to recant and return to idolatry—against the Christians and, above all, the monks. Despite all the efforts to persuade, and despite the temptations and threats, Ioasaph remains steadfast in his faith, and finally manages to convince his father to abjure his old beliefs and become Christian. They died blessed deaths, the one shortly after the other.

The legend bears striking resemblances to Damaskenos' *Enkomion of St. Barbara*, the daughter of a pagan nobleman Dioskoros. She became Christian and, withstanding the tortures imposed on her by her father, clung to her pious conviction. The end of the two tales, however, is different: Barbara loses the earthly battle and is slaughtered by Dioskoros, whereas Ioasaph wins not only in heaven but also on earth. There is, however, a detail in these stories that underscores their similarity: Dioskoros confined Barbara to a tower adorned by pagan idols, while Abenner confined Ioasaph to a beautiful palace. The goal of both fathers is the same: to remove the young person from the real world.

The similarity of plots helps bring into relief a significant difference between the two tales. In both cases the conversion—the transformation of the young and beautiful hero/heroine—forms the climax of the story, but the treatment of these conversions is very different in each. Barbara accepts Christianity instantaneously or, more specifically, she does not experience the trauma of a psychological shift: Dioskoros, according to John of Damascus, had an only-born daughter (*μονογενής*: a seminal epithet, usually applied to Christ) who was radiant in her beauty and dignity; she lived quietly in the tower, far from the commotion of the world, and developed pious thoughts (*Barbara*, par. 7.4-11); she abhorred, continues the theologian, the falseness of idol worship and contemplated the holy and co-substantial Trinity, meditating on the Kingdom of Heaven and punishment in Hell (l. 12-17). From where it was that the girl, locked in her tower, acquired her Christian faith is a question that is not asked, least of all answered. She merely saw in her mind's eye the image of virgins carrying torches and heading toward the heavenly chamber of their bridegroom Christ (l. 20-21). Barbara rejected marriage proposals (a traditional

<sup>15</sup> See on it M. ALEXANDRE, *Barlaam et Ioasaph: la conversion du héros et du roman*, *Le monde du roman grec*, Paris 1992, 259-282. Cf. W. F. BOLTON, *Parable, Allegory and Romance in the Legend of Barlaam and Josaphat*, *Traditio* 14, 1958, 359-368.

<sup>16</sup> See Italian tr. by S. RONCHEY and P. CESARETTI, *Vita bizantina di Barlaam e Ioasaf*, Milan 1980.

hagiographical topos that appears also in the *Barlaam*), and as soon as Dioskoros left for an unspecified country, Barbara, "the maid servant of the Trinity," commanded workers to make three windows in the bathhouse, instead of two, as a symbol of the Trinity (par. 8.13-17).

Ioasaph's conversion is described in a completely different manner. First of all, unlike Dioskoros, King Abenner is not a cruel tyrant (despite his relentless persecution of monks). Rather, he is introduced not only as a man of great wealth and power (this would sound ambivalent in a Byzantine milieu), but brave in warfare and proud of his splendid stature and handsome face. We shall never know whether this image reflects the laudatory view of Constantine V which, according to Theophanes (p. 496.14-16), was predominant in the early ninth century, when the iconoclast emperor was praised for his victories over the Bulgarians. Whatever the case, Abenner was fond of his son and dearly wanted him to return to the ancestral religion, and he was not sincere when he threatened to punish him.

Ioasaph was brought up in accordance with the educational system (*παιδεία*) of the Ethiopians and Persians (par. 29). Abenner ordered that Ioasaph be in no way exposed to any of the inconveniences of life, that he be shown only pleasantries. But the inquisitive mind of the young prince was puzzled by the enigma of his confinement, and finally he asked his father to let him see the world outside. Step by step Ioasaph was introduced to the troubles of human existence, he saw the crippled, the blind and the dead. He came to the conclusion that life is bitter (par. 34), and thus he was prepared for his meeting with the pious hermit Barlaam.

The long conversation with Barlaam creates the possibility of the psychological development of the young prince that reaches its climax in his baptism. Initially Ioasaph looks for proof (*ἀσφαλῆ πληροφορίαν*, par. 67) of Barlaam's words, and then asks how he may attain the state of blessedness (par. 143). He wants to become aware of the riches of divine glory, but Barlaam explains to him something that is missing from the *Martyrion of Barbara*: namely, that God's glory and might cannot be expressed in words, and that only God can impart them to a believer (par. 144). The writer formulates the principle of spontaneous conversion (as experienced also by Barbara), but in fact he depicts the progress of his hero by slow steps toward the truth.

Another difference between the conversion of Barbara and Ioasaph is the form and the content of Barlaam's inculcations. While the theology of the *Enkomion* is auctorial—it is formulated by Damaskenos—the theology in the *Barlaam* is actorial—it derives from the hermit, not the writer. The core of the drama as observed by Damaskenos is metaphysical: in order to destroy the power of death God, who sees the fall of mankind caused by "the intelligible and perceptible serpent", sends to earth "the good shepherd" born of a girl not knowing marriage (par. 4). And the deeds of Barbara, "the maid servant of the Trinity", are described in the same way: steadfast and rational, she revokes and heals the deception and foolishness committed by the *ur*-mother Eve (par. 8.26-27). Barlaam, in his admonitions addressed to Ioasaph, stresses primarily the practical principles of Christian morality: one has to abstain from every kind of sin, repent (par. 87-99), be

generous in almsgiving (par. 126f., 160), practice virtue (par. 173-178), be not afraid of death (par. 152f.); and at the very end again Barlaam exhorts his pupil to toil hard, be strong like the good soldier, desist from arrogance, and so on (par. 350-353). The author requires the worship of icons (par. 166, cf. par. 313) and the veneration of relics (par. 198f.). Only in passing, within the extended framework of his doctrinal teaching, does Barlaam touch upon a question so dear to John Damaskenos—belief in the life-giving Trinity (par. 161f.)—and he does not want to dwell on this topic: this idea, he says, should be accepted without questioning (par. 163), and immediately he moves from these sublime theological problems to the narration of Christ's sufferings (par. 164) and the ritual of the Eucharist (par. 165). This large body of indoctrination is supplemented by smaller episodes, such as the dialogue of King Abenner with his former archsatriap who had turned his back on the false world and joined the monks (par. 8-17). In this dialogue the man, dressed in vile and coarse rags, recommends that the king forget false pleasantries and instead cling to things eternal; certainly the author knows that the Son is coeternal with the Father and that He saved mankind by His death on the Cross, but the weight of the dialogue is on moral indoctrinations, not the mystery of the Trinity.

### C. Composition and characters

We have seen that John Damaskenos supplied his homilies with prologues and epilogues, using them often for theological deliberations. Thus in the preamble to the *Enkomion for Chrysostom*, the great theologian chooses to remind the reader that his hero taught that the Godhead is one in three *hypostaseis* and that God became incarnate in a single *hypostasis* (par. 3: *Schriften* V, 360f.). In the preamble to the *Enkomion of Barbara* he rejects the mundane theaters, hippodromes and *palaestrae*, and calls the reader to attend another theater, beneficial for the soul, where innumerable heavenly hosts go to battle (par. 2: *Schriften* V, 257). But to the vast text of the *Barlaam* no epilogue is appended. After describing the burial of Ioasaph, the author merely closes with "Here endeth this story, which I have written to the best of my ability" (par. 365). This is not the usual Damascene technique: it is not an attempt to sum up the events presented in so extensive a discourse. The *proaemium* to the legend is longer than the minimal epilogue, but unlike the theoretical exordia of Damaskenos it is factual and down-to-earth, the second part being similar to Julius Caesar's introduction to the *Gallic Wars*: "The so-called land of the Indians," it begins, "is vast and populous" (par. 3). Before this the writer speaks of the marvellous deeds of saints and martyrs, a digression necessary to explain the choice of the theme, and (following the "Caesarean" description) goes on briefly to describe Christ's resurrection and the mission of the apostles.

The main part of the *Barlaam* is the agon in the form of a dialogue ("questions and answers") comprised of Barlaam's teaching and Ioasaph's quest for truth, encompassing approximately 175 pages of the Loeb edition (par. 39-189), i.e. more than half of the entire text. The first agon is followed by a second (par. 198-202), namely, that of Abenner and the leader of the hermits, and a third (par. 206-232) in which Abenner and Ioasaph are the protagonists. Lastly, there is the dispute of Ioasaph and Nachor (par. 234-255), mostly a reproduction of the second-century *Apology* of Aristides. The first and main agon (admonition) is a systematic exposition of biblical history and Christian ethics and ritual, and the author attempts to overcome the monotony of such a presentation. He uses the actorial manner of presentation, putting his views (or common views of the Orthodox Christian community) into the mouth of the ancient hermit; at a certain point in the admonition Barlaam withdraws to his house (par. 178f.), later returning to continue the dialogue. Then the division of the discourse into questions and answers (i.e. the format of a catechism) helps maintain the reader's attention, not only compositionally, by breaking the text into smaller sections, but also by underlining the spiritual progress of Ioasaph as he moves from the darkness of paganism to the enlightenment of Christianity. But perhaps the most effective means employed in the *Barlaam* to alleviate the monotony of the doctrinal narration is the inserted episodes: ten short "parables" within the story, nine of which are woven into Barlaam's admonitions, and one—the story told by Theudas [par. 268f]—lying outside it. The stories are both paradoxical and edifying. For example, Barlaam relates what is in essence a novelette (par. 118-125) about a "great city" that chose strangers for its temporary kings and then exiled them to a barren island; one clever man, however, managed to provide for his future exile, and subsequently enjoyed a pleasant life on the island of his banishment. Paradoxical in plot is yet another novelette whose hero is a young man to whom a noble girl was betrothed in marriage, but who then abandoned her and fell in love with the highly intelligent daughter of a poor old man (par. 139-143). In these episodes we meet kings and ordinary men, a talking nightingale, a gazelle and a unicorn, caskets full of dead bones and precious stones and pearls—images whose source lies in folklore, in part evidently oriental, like beautiful patchwork on the monotonous quilt of Barlaam's admonitions. Smaller touches in the form of similes are also intended to make the presentation more lively: Barlaam asserts that in comparison with Christ the whole world is no more than a small weight on a set of scales, or a drop of morning dew that falls upon the earth (par. 149). The leader of the hermits compares the king collecting his taxes (φόρους καὶ τέλη) "from land and sea" with the man who keeps hounds and falcons, spoiling and fondling them to begin with, but eventually seizing the game from out of their mouths (par. 200f.). Some elements of the plot are conceived as adventurous and entertaining. On several occasions the theme of escape and quest is used: the king looks for Barlaam who had fled from the palace after being unmasked as Christian, and—to thicken the plot—commands a certain Nachor (who bore a very striking resemblance to Barlaam) to impersonate Barlaam. Later Ioasaph also looks for Barlaam, and the ancient hermit recognizes him, despite the drastic change in his appearance.

It should be pointed out that John Damaskenos was more interested in theological subtleties than in the diversity of characters that gave flesh to his ideas. Barbara and Dioskoros are virtually the only characters in her *Martyrion*, and they are personifications of absolute good and evil. In the *Enkomion for Chrysostom* the hero is surrounded by utterly grey figures such as Meletios, *proedros* of the Antiochean church, who appears merely to ordain Chrysostom, or an unnamed widow whom the saint tried to defend before the unnamed empress (Eudoxia). No richer in personages are Damaskenos' biblical homilies. On the other hand, in the *Barlaam*, besides the main trio of Abenner, Ioasaph and Barlaam, numerous characters, major and minor, are portrayed, some acting in the events, some recalled in stories told by other actors. Among these secondary characters is Zardan, a particularly vivid figure: a man fond of his ruler, loving the ruler's heir, highly conscious of his duty and suffering in the troubled situation (for details, see below, p. 157). No less complex is the portrayal of Nachor, who, physically, resembles Barlaam, and agreed to pretend to be Barlaam in order to throw Ioasaph into confusion and urge him to recant Christianity (par. 193); eventually, however, he had a change of heart and disavowed idolatry. Another participant in the story, the magician Theudas, was summoned by Abenner to succour the evil gods who had been defeated in a dispute. Theudas arrived at the palace clad in a sheepskin and holding a palm-branch (sheepskin appears in the New Testament as the attire of the persecuted just men [*Hebr.* 11.37] and later became the characteristic dress of monks and hermits), and advised the king to try and lure Ioasaph with the help of pretty damsels (par. 263-280). These characters (and others) are not flat, one-dimensional figures, they are not mere stereotyped symbols of human qualities; they are people of intelligence and devoted to their creed, honest in their ways, as was Abenner even before his conversion to Christianity, and by no means devoid of doubt or uncertainty.

Purely rhetorical ornament is not common in the *Barlaam*, although the author uses proverbs and paradoxes, and even inserts verses, such as the iambic line πάσης ἀποστάς δαισιδαίμωνος πλάνης (par. 318). He works first and foremost with the plot, modifying the traditional monotony to the need to depict changing events, and with portraits. It seems, therefore, that the style (or system of grammatical constructions) of the *Barlaam* is different from that of John Damaskenos' homilies.

Where should one place the *Barlaam* in terms of genre? In the lemma two terms are employed: "edifying story" (ἱστορία ψυχωφελής) and *vita*, or life (βίος). Indeed some scholars class the text as a hagiographical work (it is included in BHG), although it lacks the regular hagiographical trappings of miracles, healings, and visions (only some elements of pious foresight of the future are briefly mentioned). This move leads to some confusion, since there are no such saints as Barlaam and Ioasaph in the Byzantine calendar, and they are not mentioned in *synaxaria* until very late.<sup>17</sup> The term "romance" has also been applied

<sup>17</sup> Only in a *synaxarium* of 1301 do we find a short commemoration of "Ioasaph, the son of King Abener"; cf. DÖLGER, *Der griechische Barlaam-Roman*, 34, and F. HALKIN, review of this book,

to the book, a term which is all-embracing. B. P. Reardon defines the romance/novel as an "extensive narrative fiction in prose, destined for reading and not for performance, describing the vicissitudes and psychological torments of private individuals, culminating in their ultimate felicity, and achieving through the presentation of their fears and aspirations the satisfaction of similar emotions in the reader."<sup>18</sup> True, all these points can be found in the *Barlaam*, but one may well ask whether any kind of prose fiction remains beyond the scope of such a definition. Whatever the *Barlaam* is, it is quite different from the Late Antique romances that seem not to have survived beyond the fourth century. Indeed, their aims are different: in the *Barlaam* adventure *per se* is relegated to the background and the power of love reduced to a sordid attempt to seduce Ioasaph. Philosophy and ethics dominate the story-telling, and small pearls of parables are scattered about the text for the reader to contemplate in isolation from the story itself. Probably, we may characterize the work (of John Sabbaites?) as a Christian romance.

AB 71, 1953, 476. This is a good example of the transformation of a literary figure into an object of worship.

<sup>18</sup> B. P. REARDON, *The Form of Greek Romance*, Princeton NJ 1991, 3 n. 2.

## CHAPTER SIX

### KOSMAS THE MELODE

#### *A. Biography (BHG 394-395)*

Kosmas' life is described in several *vitae* on the basis of which Th. Detorakes<sup>1</sup> has established the main pattern of the poet's biography: Kosmas was born in Damascus ca. 674/6, was ordained bishop of Maiouma ca. 734/5 and died in 752/4 or 751/2;<sup>2</sup> he was foster-brother, close friend and collaborator of John Damaskenos; they worked together in the monastery of Mar-Saba, and Kosmas supported John in his struggle against Iconoclasm. To what extent, however, do our meagre sources allow us to draw such precise conclusions about Kosmas' life?<sup>3</sup>

Contemporary authors ignored Kosmas. He was not mentioned in the anathemas issued against John Damaskenos by the Iconoclastic council of 754, and neither does Theophanes (who knew of John's role) mention Kosmas. There is a single isolated reference by the tenth-century chronicler Pseudo-Symeon, who inserts the name of Kosmas between Damaskenos and Theodore Graptos in the list of opponents of Iconoclasm.<sup>4</sup> However, in the lemma of the preamble of the *Dialectica*, which functions as an introduction to the whole *Source of Knowledge*, Kosmas, bishop of Maiouma (*Schriften*

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<sup>1</sup> Th. E. DETORAKES, *Κοσμάς ὁ Μελωδός. Βίος καὶ ἔργον*, Thessalonike 1979. See on Kosmas BARDENHEWER, *Altkirchliche Literatur* V, 173-176. Kosmas is omitted in CPG III.

<sup>2</sup> This date is suggested in Th. E. DETORAKES, *Ρωμανικαὶ ἐπιδράσεις εἰς τὴν ποίησιν Κοσμά τοῦ Μελωδοῦ*, *EEBS* 44, 1979/80, 223.

<sup>3</sup> See doubts in A. KAZHDAN - S. GERO, Kosmas of Jerusalem: a More Critical Approach to his Biography, *BZ* 82, 1989, 122-132, repr. in A. KAZHDAN, *Authors and Texts in Byzantium*, Aldershot 1993, pt. X, 122-132.

<sup>4</sup> R. BROWNING, Notes on the 'Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio', *Byzantion* 35, 1965, 410. Later Kedrenos drew upon this passage.

I, 51) is mentioned as the person to whom the work is dedicated. This lemma, although confirmed by manuscript tradition, seems dubious: the text of the introduction expressly designates the addressee of the *Source* in the plural: μακάριοι, συγγνώμονες, θεοτίμητοι. In other words, the theologian addresses not an individual but a community. The dedication to Kosmas (which does not appear in the Ephrem Mcire's Georgian translation of the *Dialectics*) is, in all probability, a later addition by a copyist of the tenth century. Kosmas evidently was known in the tenth or even in the ninth century, when citations from his hymns were included in the *Epimerismoi to the Psalms* compiled by Choïroboskos or his pupil.<sup>5</sup> More substantial is the passage in Theophanes Continuatus (p. 365.21-24): in the day of Leo VI, narrates the chronicler, "the wisest monk Mark," *oikonomos* of the monastery of St. Mokios (in a late tradition he is characterized as Mark, bishop of Otranto), was ordered to supplement the *Tetraodion* "of the great Kosmas" for Holy Saturday. For the time being we shall pass over the question of the authorship of the *Tetraodion for Holy Saturday* (some scholars have attributed it to Kassia [see below, p. 317-322]). The episode related by Theophanes Continuatus suggests that around 900, when Mark flourished, the Byzantines were still tampering with the legacy of Kosmas; as for Kosmas' biography the chronicler provides us with no information.

Our earliest biographical data on Kosmas comes from the late tenth-century *Souda* Lexicon (only conjecturally can one surmise that the *Souda* evidence on Kosmas was borrowed from the ninth-century revision of Hesychios the Illustis, which most probably never in fact existed)<sup>6</sup>; the *Souda* entry (ed. Adler 2, 649.32-34, no. 467) is very brief: Kosmas came from Jerusalem, was a contemporary of John Damaskenos and had great "musical and harmonious" talent. There is no mention there of the episcopate of Maiouma, nor of his friendship with John Damaskenos.

The earliest manuscripts of the *vitae* of Kosmas (sometimes combining him with John Damaskenos) are of the tenth century. Their biographical data are meagre and contradictory,<sup>7</sup> and the relationship between the various redactions is still unclear. Detorakes discerns three major versions: type A, represented by the "Marcian" *vita* and related texts, including the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* and the anonymous "Lauriote" *vita* that survived in a manuscript of the eleventh century (or later);<sup>8</sup> type B, encompassing the Jerusalem *Vita of John Damaskenos*, its Arabic counterpart by the priest Michael, and the "paired" *vitae* of John and Kosmas by John Merkouropoulos (see above, p. 76f.); and

<sup>5</sup> Ch. THEODORIDIS, *Der Hymnograph Klemens terminus post quem für Choïroboskos*, *BZ* 73, 1980, 343; A. R. DYCK, *Epimerismi Homerici* I, Berlin-New York 1983, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Hypothesis of G. WENTZEL, *Die griechische Übersetzung der viri inlustri des Hieronymus*, Leipzig 1895, 38f.

<sup>7</sup> See reviews of DETORAKES' monograph, first of all that of Ph. PATTENDEN, *JEclHist* 32, 1982, 324; also J. DARROUZÈS, *REB* 39, 1981, 337; M. G., *Irénikon* 54, 1981, 293; E. BRIÈRE, *Sobornost* 3, 1981, 236.

<sup>8</sup> Published by Th. DETORAKES, *Vie inédite de Cosmas le Mélode*, *AB* 99, 1981, 101-116.

type C, which includes several redactions that survived in later manuscripts —the so-called *vita* of Chalke, the "Athenian" *Vita of John Damaskenos*, and the "Vatican" *Vita of Kosmas*.<sup>9</sup> Since there is little external or formal evidence by which to date these texts, the only possible approach is through an analysis of their contents. The simplest story is that of the Marcian *vita* (probably of the tenth century). It relates only that Kosmas was an orphan brought up by Damaskenos' father; he then became a monk and eventually bishop of Maiouma, and wrote many *troparia* (*triodia*?) and kanons. It also contains an obviously legendary episode which describes a purported journey of Kosmas to Constantinople during the reign of Leo III. The Lauriote manuscript differs from the Marcian version in many points: the compiler has Kosmas born in Damascus, fails to mention his episcopate in Maiouma, introduces his participation in the struggle against the iconoclasts, and specifically states that he died at a relatively young age.

The Jerusalem biographer (type B, according to Detorakes) mentions that Kosmas was bishop of Maiouma and, like the "Lauriote", he stresses Kosmas' collaboration with John Damaskenos during the iconoclast conflict. There is, however, no story of his adoption by John's father: Kosmas is characterized only as John's companion (*συμμύστης*) and spiritual brother (*κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀδελφός*). Finally, the Jerusalem biography contradicts the "Lauriote" version by emphasizing that Kosmas died "at an old age."

Comparing types A and B of the *Vita of Kosmas* with the *Souda* evidence we can observe the following evolution: from nothing more than a contemporary of Damaskenos, Kosmas became his friend and companion, even his foster-brother; his Jerusalem origins were first suppressed and eventually replaced by Damascus; further, the episcopate of Maiouma was introduced. Confusion, however, does not end here: the *vitae* describe the activity of another personage, the teacher of John and Kosmas: first, he is an anonymous *asekretis*, the teacher of John only; then he becomes one of the captives settled by John's father in various places; in the Lauriote *vita* he acts as the teacher of Kosmas, not of John. In the Jerusalem biography new features emerge: the teacher originated from Italy and bore the same name as Kosmas. John Damaskenos devoted not a single word to his alleged teacher, the anonymous *asekretis* or Kosmas. And in the *Epistle on the Trisagion hymn*, he calls himself a disciple of the blessed patriarch John V of Jerusalem (706-35). Again, his works do not confirm the existence of the teacher Kosmas who plays such a seminal part in the hagiographical legend of Damaskenos.

This confused biographical situation did not escape the notice of some of John's medieval biographers: as soon as the priest Michael announces the name of Kosmas of Calabria, monk, philosopher and teacher of Damaskenos, he warns the reader not to confuse him with another Kosmas, bishop of Maiouma, who grew up together with John. This warning is understandable in the light of the fact that there was a group of texts that

<sup>9</sup> Also published by Th. DETORAKES, *Ἀνέκδοτος βίος Κοσμᾶ τοῦ Μαΐουμᾶ*, *EEBS* 41, 1974, 259-296.

knew only one Kosmas, the teacher of Damaskenos. This group is represented by type C: in the Chalke recension we read that Kosmas was born on Crete, was captured by pirates and brought to Damascus; there he became the teacher of "John the Hagiopolite", taught him secretly the Christian faith and baptized him without the knowledge of the emir. The Chalke recension omits completely the figure of Kosmas the pupil and concentrates on the trio of Kosmas the teacher, Mansur *archon* of Damascus and the latter's son, John, born pagan and baptized by Kosmas. The trio is clearly similar to that of the Christian romance *Barlaam and Ioasaph*. The Athenian version follows that of Chalke, whereas the Vatican redaction (combining types B and C) knows both Kosmas. Finally, the *vitae* of type C develop the theme of Kosmas' travels hinted at in the Marcian version: according to the *vita* of Chalke, he journeyed to Egypt, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome.

Merkouropoulos (type B, according to Detorakes) tried to preserve both Kosmas, but ascribed to the pupil some features of the teacher. Thus he relates that Kosmas the pupil was appointed *asekretis*. Then Merkouropoulos gives a "precise" date for Kosmas' election to the episcopate of Maiouma: he was allegedly ordained by Elias of Jerusalem. This statement adds a further complication. Elias I died in 518 and cannot therefore be taken into consideration. Elias II administered the see of Jerusalem in 770-97, that is, after Kosmas' death as established by Detorakes. To support his dates, therefore, Detorakes appeals to A. Baumstark's discovery of another Elias of Jerusalem who passed away in 728; Baumstark, however, writes of an Elias of Antioch, not of Jerusalem (who, incidentally, died in 723 not 728).<sup>10</sup> In the light of this error, there is little reason to trust Merkouropoulos' statement that Kosmas was Damaskenos' senior by five years, particularly since the Vatican redaction states that the time separating the two was only three years.

Thus we have a very elaborate and often confusing legend of Kosmas. We may assume that he was a contemporary of John Damaskenos (but not his foster-brother), that he was born in Jerusalem rather than on Crete or in Italy, and that he was a poet of hymns already famous in the ninth century.

Kosmas' corpus consists primarily of hymns —kanons and *triodia*<sup>11</sup>— and, as in the case of other hymnographers of the eighth century, the distinction between the genuine *œuvre* of Kosmas and that of other poets is by no means easy: not only are the same poems sometimes attributed to Kosmas and to other hymnographers, but lemmata differentiate between a simple Kosmas, Kosmas Hagiopolite and Hierosolymite, bishop of Maiouma, Kosmas the Melode and Poet, and Kosmas the Monk. Is it possible that all these

<sup>10</sup> A. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn 1922, 269; cf. A. VAN ROEY, DHGE 15, 1963, 164.

<sup>11</sup> FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 287; SZÖVÉRFY, *Hymnography* 2, 14-16.

designations and epithets apply to one and the same person or do they cover different individuals?<sup>12</sup> No modern study has investigated this problem.

Kosmas enjoyed a high reputation among later Byzantines. Not only did John Merkouropoulos praise the high quality of his poetry, but contemporaries of Merkouropoulos, such as Gregory of Corinth and Theodore Prodromos, wrote commentaries on his works.

### B. Hymnographer

Ed. CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm*, 161-204

We shall now consider the hymns collected by Christ and Paranikas in their *Anthologia* and supplemented by Th. Detorakes, whose collection is larger, containing a list of thirty-three kanons of which nine are marked as dubious or falsely attributed (some of these are unedited).<sup>13</sup>

It seems that by the time of Kosmas' experimentation with the new form of ecclesiastical poetry, the kanon (so evident in Andrew's *Megas Kanon* and in Damaskenos' iambic kanons) had reached a high level and its standard form was more or less in place. Detorakes has even suggested that Kosmas invented the kanon form,<sup>14</sup> though this is an assumption that is difficult to demonstrate convincingly when one considers the chronological problems involved and the lack of comprehensive critical editions.

It is necessary to examine the typical formal features of the kanon as produced by Kosmas, some of which he obviously shared with other hymnographers. The basic kanon consists of nine odes, but the second was usually omitted and used only during Lent. Each ode begins with a *heirmos* followed by several (usually two or three) stanzas or *troparia*. The *heirmos* establishes the rhythmic pattern of the whole ode. Ideally, each ode connects with the appropriate biblical canticle: the first *heirmos* dwells on the song of thanksgiving after the crossing of the Red Sea (*Ex.* 15.1-18), the second ode on the admonishment to the

<sup>12</sup> C. A. TRYPANIS, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, Vienna 1968 [Wiener byzantinistische Studien VI], 115-125, published a kontakion on the *Dormition of the Theotokos* composed by a certain Kosmas, whom he distinguishes from Kosmas the Melode of the eighth century. DETORAKES, *Koσμᾱς*, 221-226, attributes the poem, "without any doubt," to Kosmas the Melode.

<sup>13</sup> DETORAKES, *Koσμᾱς*, 178-205. A fragment from Kosmas' *kanon on the Epiphany* (kan. III) was published by K. TREU, *Fragment einer griechischen liturgischen Rolle aus Damaskus*, in M. GEERARD (ed.), *Opes Atticae. Miscellanea philologica et historica Raymondo Bogaert et Hermannno Van Looy oblata*, Den Haag-Nijhoff, 1990 (= *Sacris erudiri* 31, 1989/90), 417-427, who dates the manuscript to the eighth (and certainly no later than the ninth) century.

<sup>14</sup> DETORAKES, *Koσμᾱς*, 149-157.



Hebrews (*Deut.* 32.1-43), the third on the prayer of Anna (*I Sam.* [= *I Reg.*] 2.1-10), the fourth on the prayer of Habacuc (*Hab.* 3.2-19), the fifth on the prayer of Isaiah (*Is.* 26.9-19), the sixth on the prayer of Jonah (*Jonah* 2.3-10), the seventh on the first prayer of the Three Children in the furnace (*Dan.* 3.26-45), the eighth on the second prayer of the Three Children (*Dan.* 3.52-90), and the ninth on the *Magnificat* of Mary (*Luke* 1.47-55) and the prophecy of Zacharias (*Luke* 1.68-79). The events of the first, sixth, seventh and eighth *heirmoi* were interpreted as prefigurations of events in the New Testament. Some kanons were bound together by acrostics. Detorakes lists sixteen kanons of Kosmas composed with acrostics, four of them including Kosmas' name (once as Hagiopolite and another time as Hierosolymite); one is alphabetical. For the inner group of odes Kosmas used refrains (not necessarily in each and every ode) which may be freely reused in other kanons. It is significant that the *theotokion* (the last stanza in each ode devoted to the Mother of God, usually independent of the content of the ode and seldom embellished with the same refrain as the rest of the ode) which had become regular feature of the kanon in the ninth century is rarely, if ever, present in Kosmas' kanons.<sup>15</sup>

The kanon *on the Exaltation of the Cross* is undoubtedly an authentic work of the poet; both Gregory of Corinth and Theodore Prodromos, in their commentaries on the poem, attribute it to Kosmas. The theme of the kanon is cohesively and clearly developed. It begins in the *heirmos* of the first ode, the Crossing of the Red Sea, thus allowing Kosmas to introduce from the outset the theme of the Cross: Moses, says the poet, made the sign of the Cross with his rod straight over the Red Sea, and divided it in order to allow Israel to cross. Then, by marking again the sign of the invincible weapon in breath, he reunited (the waters) and stroke the army of the pharaoh. The presentation is energetic and full of movement: verbs and participles dominate, and in the *heirmos* the only adjective (a descriptive, not narrative, element of discourse, usually slowing down the action) is ἀήττητον ὄπλον, "invincible weapon."

The theme of the Cross is repeated in the first *troparion*, which is closer to the biblical text, with the patricularizing of time and space. The poet stresses, first, that it was in "olden times" that Moses by prefiguring the sign of the Holy Passion (*Exod.* 14.21 is much more restrained, having only that "Moses stretched out his hand," but exegetes, from Justin on, interpreted this gesture as the sign of the Cross), gained the higher place among the saints. Secondly, he underlines that by stretching his palms Moses gave to himself the form of the Cross, consequently making manifest the [Holy] trophy, destroying, thus, the might (or "sovereign power," κράτος) of the Amalekite.

<sup>15</sup> DETORAKES, *Kosmās*, 128, lists four kanons with *theotokia*, of which one (that for St. George) uses only one *theotokion*, in the first ode. We may suspect that these *theotokia* were added later or that the kanons with *theotokia* are not authentic. A kanon of "Kosmas the poet" survived, which DETORAKES, *Kosmās*, 189f., considers the work of the Melode despite the presence of *theotokia* bearing the acrostic with the name of Theophanes. At any rate, typical of Kosmas is the ninth ode devoted to the Mother of God, rather than a *theotokion* proper.

In the next *troparion*, the interpretation of the victory becomes metaphysical: Moses triumphs here not over the Amalekite, a legendary nation, but over the Serpent, and in the last *troparion* Kosmas leaves the field of "olden times" and moves closer to his own day: "The sky [or heaven] showed the victorious Cross to the pious sovereign and godly-minded emperor who destroys with its help the arrogance of evil enemies." The emperor implied here is Constantine, whose legend will be examined in the next chapter. Thus the first ode is tightly structured by its theme, and by its vocabulary (the word σταυρός appears in every stanza) and refrain: "For thus we sing of Christ, our God, glory be to Him," the last part of which reappears in other kanons, such as kan. III *On Epiphany*, or kan. IV *On the Hypapante*, Christ's Presentation in the Temple).

Kosmas moves from the emperor to the Church, to which ode III is devoted. He begins with the rod (ῥάβδος), already mentioned in the *heirmos* of the first ode: both *heirmoi* thus acquire a common denominator. In ode III, however, the rod is more than an instrument of victory, it is a prefiguration (τύπος) of the mystery revealed by God: "In the previously barren church now the tree of the Cross flourished in power and steadfastness." The Cross is the power and the steadfastness of the church, the poet repeats in the next *troparion*, and he takes the next step in the final *troparion* by proclaiming the Cross "the power and the steadfastness of emperors." Just as the word "rod" unites the opening lines of the two odes, the word βασιλεύς unites their last.

The "mystery" of ode III is ecclesiological. It reappears immediately in the *heirmos* of ode IV, but on a different level: "I have hearkened (εἰσακήκοα), O Lord, unto the mystery of Thy economy [of salvation]." The verb "hearkened" initiates the fourth ode in some other kanons (for instance, kan. V *On the Transfiguration*; and ἀκήκοα in kan. III *On Epiphany*). The mood of the kanon changes accordingly: the poet speaks here not of the destruction of the enemy, but of the peaceful work of the Cross, converting pagan tribes to Christianity, to baptism and to the end of false beliefs. The lines are shorter, the rhythm more energetic. The lack of a refrain may be coincidence, but it nevertheless underlines a change in approach.

The word πλάνη, "error, or false concept", reappears in ode V, reinforced by the more active ἀπάτη: the tribes living in the darkness of false and deceptive beliefs would see the divine light from the bright Cross. But ode V is not a simple reinforcement of the preceding ode—it is, in a sense, historic: the Cross here is not only a metaphysical, transcendental sign, it is a material object made of wood, on which Christ was executed (the phrase is repeated four times in two different renderings), and moreover it is the visible (φανής), shining Cross, a "sign in the air".

While ode V depicts the physical aspect of Christ's execution, ode VI proceeds to its soteriological aspect. Again, Kosmas masterfully employs the traditional theme of the sixth ode, namely that of Jonah swallowed by the whale and released on the third day.<sup>16</sup> It is a

<sup>16</sup> On this theme see Y. M. DUVAL, *Le livre de Jonas dans la littérature chrétienne grecque et latine*, Paris 1973. Duval's study ends long before the period of Kosmas.



traditional symbolic tale, prefiguring the Resurrection of Christ. The phrase "Christ fixed to flesh" (ὁ σαρκὶ προσπαγείς), repeated twice in the ode, links the text to the previous ode that speaks of the Cross on which Christ was fixed (τῷ ἐν ἑαυτῷ παγέντι), but as usual Kosmas takes the image a step further, beyond the visible and real world, introducing the topic of the resurrection that restores life: the Cross here is not an instrument of victory, it is the life-giving Cross, the life-giving sign. Again, the ode lacks a refrain (like ode IV), and again it marks a radical transformation in the composition of the kanon.

The traditional theme of odes VII and VIII is that of the three young Hebrews thrown, by command of the king, into a furnace. In ode VII Kosmas deliberates on their resolution and moral victory over the tyrant, but the ode's end is unexpected: the Cross, which in the second *troparion* seemed to be the negation of the tree that ruined Adam (the poet plays on the double meaning of the word ξύλον —tree and cross alike), emerges in the final *troparion* as the victorious weapon of emperors. Ode VIII continues the theme of the three Hebrews, but this time on a transcendental level: the mystical significance of the triad of the Hebrews is stressed (the boys are equal in numbers to the *hypostaseis* of the Trinity) and the paradox worked by God —the transformation of the flame into dew— is described in rapturous tones. The dominant mood of the ode is jubilation, expressed in verbs of praise and veneration, such as εὐλογεῖτε, ὑμνεῖτε, ὑψοῦτε, ὑπερυψοῦτε, προσκυνεῖτε; and the final *troparion* parallels that in ode VII: the faithful *basileis* of the Christians receive from God the victorious weapon. Ode IX praises the Mother of God and has no obvious links with the theme of the kanon.

The kanon *on the Exaltation of the Cross* is a beautifully knit piece. Kosmas consistently develops his theme, using the set traditional topics (Moses, Jonah, the Three Hebrews) to bind his composition; they enter organically into his construct. The transition from one ode to another is not only thematic but also "linguistic," as the crucial words of an ode are foreshadowed by the wording of the previous ode. The odes are not dismembered, isolated episodes but parts of a greater unity: the kanon, and probably —due to the repetition of central themes— of a general hymnographic pattern that extends beyond a single kanon.

This kanon is not only a piece of literature; it is also a political document.<sup>17</sup> To appreciate this, it should be stressed firstly that Kosmas used similar biblical exegesis in other kanons. He lauds the miraculous Crossing of the Red Sea as the symbol of victory in the kanon *on the Transfiguration* (kan. V), in the *Triodion on the Monday of the Holy Week* (kan. VIII), in the kanons *on Palm Sunday* (kan. VII), *Epiphany* (kan. III), *Holy Friday* (kan. XI) and *Pentecost* (kan. XIV). Prodomos, the twelfth-century commentator of Kosmas, emphasizes the militant and triumphant function of the Cross in the Moses episode: in Prodomos' words, Kosmas moves from the scene of the Red Sea to the power

<sup>17</sup> See A. KAZHDAN, Kosmas of Jerusalem: Can we Speak of his Political Views?, *Le Muséon* 103, 1990, 329-346, repr. in ID., *Authors and Texts*, pt. XI. Some formulations of the article are too simplistic.

of the Cross; then he dwells on the defeat of the Amalekite; Moses, continues Prodomos, prefigured the victory over the hated enemy, the ruin of the Amalekite.<sup>18</sup> The interpretation offered by Kosmas and his commentator differs drastically from that given in the classic *Life of Moses* by Gregory of Nyssa: in Gregory, the Crossing of the Red Sea has no military connotation whatever and is presented as a stage in mankind's growth to moral perfection.<sup>19</sup> Kosmas might have read the *Life of Moses*, but he remains indifferent to the allegorical and moral exegesis of the episode, preferring to interpret it "historically", even literally, as referring to a real military triumph.

The idea of victory evidently haunted Kosmas: he eulogizes the Lord, who is powerful in battles and smashes the heads of the crawling demons (kan. III, 1-8); he calls on Christ's followers to devour the force of the "peoples" (ἔθνη) (kan. V, 13-14), i.e. the infidel. The triumph, as seen by Kosmas, is twofold: metaphysical, over dragons and the limits of nature, and political, over the infidel, the Amalekite. The Amalekite is, naturally, a biblical ethnonym, but in the terminology of Kosmas' contemporaries it could assume a real significance: Theophanes (332.10-11), for example, speaks of the Arabs as "the Amalekite of the desert".

There should be nothing surprising in the suggestion that the idea of victory over the Arabs attracted Kosmas in general and is reflected specifically in his interpretation of biblical imagery. It is understandable that this expectation is connected with the praise of Orthodox emperors, particularly Constantine the Great. More complicated is his attitude toward another problem that disquieted Orthodox society in the eighth century, that of Iconoclasm.

The watchword "idolatry" was on the tongue of Kosmas' contemporaries. The word was ambiguous: in the vocabulary of the Orthodox it meant pagan cult, in iconoclast propaganda the veneration of icons.<sup>20</sup> John Damaskenos relates how St. Barbara destroyed the "dead idols" of her father, and in his treatise on icons condemns their cult as the worship of mere objects. Kosmas touches on this theme in the *Kanon for the martyrs Menas, Victor and Vicentius*, who rejected "the darkness of idols" as well as "the darkness of demons".<sup>21</sup>

In the kanon *for St. George* he says that the saint refused to praise "dumb idols" and venerated Christ.<sup>22</sup> The topic of the Three Hebrews, common to odes VII and VIII, could

<sup>18</sup> Theodore Prodomos, *Commentarii in carmina sacra melodorum Cosmae Hierosolymitani et Ioannis Damasceni*, ed. H. M. STEVENSON, Rome 1888, 5.32-36, 6.6-7, cf. 7.10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Gregorio de Nissa, *La vita di Mosè*, ed. M. SIMONETTI, Florence 1984, 122.1-2.

<sup>20</sup> G. OSTROGORSKY, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites*, Breslau 1929, 49.12; Johannes von Damaskos, KOTTER, *Schriften* III, 80 (*Imag.* I, 7.1).

<sup>21</sup> S. EUSTRATIADES, Κοσμάς Ἱεροσολυμίτης ὁ ποιητής, ἐπίσκοπος Μαΐουμᾶ, *Nea Sion* 28, 1933, 215, 253 and 269. Another version of the kanon, published in AHG III, 1972, 299-310, no. 25 (1), does not mention "idols"; but this version, short and supplied with *theotokia*, is probably not authentic.

<sup>22</sup> A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Ἀνέκδοτον ᾠσμα τοῦ μελωδοῦ Κοσμά, *BZ* 14, 1905, 523.23, 524.14. It is doubtful whether this kanon (having one *theotokion*) has survived in its original form.

be linked easily with the theme of idolatry, much as Prodomos did in his commentary on Kosmas, speaking of the king Nebuchadnezzar's impious *prostagma* that required prostration before the golden "icon".<sup>23</sup> Kosmas, however, does not link the theme of the Three Hebrews with the worship of idols. The biblical "golden icon" (*Dan.* 3.1) is omitted, and Kosmas, although stressing the resistance of the Three Hebrews to "the *prostagma* of the impious tyrant" (kan. I.201), to "the menace of the tyrant and the flame" (kan. V.114-117), to "the tyrannical order (*δόγμα*)" (kan. IX.1-4), to "the word (*ῥῆμα*) of the tyrant" (kan. X.16), does not explain that this *prostagma*, *dogma* and *rhema* implied the cult of false idols. And when in ode VIII of the *Kanon on Palm Sunday* (kan. VII.134-136) the poet unexpectedly exclaims that Christ liberated "us" from the "irrational deception of idols", he combines this liberation with driving off "the uncontrollable assault of all *ethne*".

The label "idolatry" seems inappropriate for the Muslim whose assaults were the main menace for the Greek world of the eighth century. The Byzantines, however, in a strange way did accuse the Arabs of idolatry. John Damaskenos affirmed that the Hagarenes worshipped idols, kissing and embracing the stone called Chabatan (Ka'ba), and despite this dared to reproach "us" for venerating the Cross.<sup>24</sup> Later Niketas of Byzantium, in his *Refutation of Muhammad*, expressed a similar opinion (PG 105, 720BC), and in the *Martyrion of the Twenty Sabaites*, who were murdered by the Arabs at the end of the eighth century, we read that the monks preferred to endure the torments imposed on them than worship idols and reject Christ.<sup>25</sup>

Kosmas avoids interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's *prostagma* as being connected with the cult of icons. Moreover, while the victorious Cross holds place of honor in Kosmas' imagery, the poet is reluctant to use the word εἰκών; he employs it only in the word's general and figurative meaning: Christ is the icon of God the Father (kan. II.8), and the Savior is "an identical icon" of the Being (kan. V.176-177).

Avoiding the icon in theme and name, Kosmas is eager to speak about the Church: the Church was barren, but now it flourishes thanks to the tree of the Cross (kan. I.33-36). In the *Kanon on the Epiphany*, Kosmas calls on the church of Christ, previously barren, to rejoice today (kan. III. 29-31). In the *Kanon for St. Menas and companions*, he returns to the same theme, albeit in a different rendering: "Rejoice, Menas, since you are celebrated by the church which is now Orthodox and fond of piety".<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, the refrain of ode I (in two *troparia*) is typical of Kosmas, as well as the μεγαλόνομεν-formula of ode IX (addressed, however, more to St. George than —as one might have expected— to the Mother of God).

<sup>23</sup> Ed. STEVENSON, 50.28-30.

<sup>24</sup> *Johannes von Damaskos, De haeresibus*, KOTTER, *Schriften* IV, 100.7-10, 78-94, see E. M. JEFFREYS, *The Image of the Arabs in Byzantine Literature, The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*, New Rochelle NY 1986, 317.

<sup>25</sup> PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Sylloge*, 28.20-21. On this text and the date of the event described see below, p. 169-182.

<sup>26</sup> EUSTRATIADES, Κοσμάς, 211.156-158.

The event that Kosmas consistently eulogized was the victory over the hated foe, the Amalekite, the *ethne*. In the *Kanon on Palm Sunday*, he combined the successful repulse of the assaults of the *ethne* with the liberation from the worship of idols. The Church of the eighth century, celebrating the victory over the Amalekite-Arab and revived after a period of barrenness, and, what is more, being a Church liberated from idolatry, can claim to be little other than the Church of Leo III and Constantine V. The sign of the Cross, especially in its capacity as victorious weapon, was the favorite symbol of the Isaurian dynasty (also accepted wholeheartedly, of course, by the orthodox iconodules, although, in their case, it shared its place with the icon).

The reading of liturgical texts as political documents is a precarious undertaking, and these observations and conclusions would carry little conviction if we had not been able to contrast Kosmas with Damaskenos, fellow-hymnographer and alleged friend and collaborator of Kosmas. Comparative analysis of texts is an old tool of historical investigation, but in Byzantine studies it is usually applied to show the dependence of one author on another, by imitation or direct borrowing. We will attempt to invert this traditional methodology and scrutinize the differences, rather than similarities (which, certainly, do exist), between the two contemporaries. The problem needs to be formulated thus: do the hymns of Damaskenos reveal the same system of (political) images as those of Kosmas, and if they do not, what does this difference signify?

The geography of Kosmas is relatively extensive. In the *Kanon on the Nativity*, he proclaims: "Jacob predicted in olden times what the peoples (*ethne*) eagerly expected: that Thou, Christ, shalt spring forth from the tribe of Judah." After this allusion to *Gen.* 49.8-10, Kosmas continues: "Thou comest to plunder the might of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria, turning deceit into God-loving faith" (kan. II.60-65). In the same kanon, he lists Ethiopians, the inhabitants of Tharsis (Spain), the islands of the Arabs, Sabaeans, Medes, and of course "the daughter of Babylon" (*Ps.* 136.8) who took captive the children of David. Certainly, almost all these names are biblical in origin, but their coincidence with the land of the Amalekites-Arabs is remarkable. Kosmas is interested in "southern" territories: he calls the monster that swallowed Jonah "the southern beast" (I. 100) —the epithet "southern" is found neither in the Bible nor in the late Roman commentators of the *Book of Jonah*. Only in Kosmas is the whale located in the same south Mediterranean as the Amalekite.

Damaskenos' geographical scope is narrower. He speaks of the four quarters of the world: the West, North, East and the Sea (Christ-Paranikas, *AnthCarm*, kan. II.106) —the *thalassa* thus replacing the South— but speaks of them only vaguely: the children of Sion, he says, come from everywhere to praise Christ. His concrete vision encompasses only Palestine, and we do not find in his poetry the broad geographical nomenclature of the Caliphate such as in Kosmas' *Kanon on the Nativity*.

The Cross emerges frequently in John's hymns, but instead of representing the instrument of victory over the earthly foe: it is the tool of the Crucifixion (kan. VIII.59); on

the Cross Christ spread his hands (kan. VIII.7-9), a gesture of passion, not victory as in the case of Moses in Kosmas; by the power of the Cross the Lord opens the gates to Paradise (kan. VI.25-27); the Cross illuminates the limits of the world (kan. VIII.69-72), saves the just (l. 127) and kills the Jew (l. 78-79). John has a personal relation with the Cross, the "might of the Cross" reinforces his decision to eulogize Christ (kan. VI.13-16), but when the poet sings the hymn of victory (l. 12) and lauds "the triumphant right hand" of the Lord (kan. VIII.1), this victory is transcendental, spiritual. John Damaskenos separates Moses from the theme of victory, allowing the biblical hero to appear primarily in the episode of the burning bush (kan. II.121, VIII.42). The scene of the Crossing of the Red Sea is presented independently of Moses and his sign of the Cross. God the Savior, exclaims John (kan. VI.1-4), led the people across the sea without getting their feet wet and drowned the army of the pharaoh (kan. VI.1-4; the poet treats this image also in another hymn: kan. V.1-4).

Unlike Kosmas, Damaskenos uses the words εἰκών and εἰκονίζω, and analogous terms, relatively frequently. He speaks of those who "paint" or "depict" the sealed womb of the Virgin that is set afire, but does not burn (kan. I.101-3), and of "painting" the Assyrian flame (kan. II.86). A similar use of the word appears in the *Treatise on Images*: "I paint the visible flesh of God" (*Imag.* I, 4.83-85 = *Schriften* III, 78). "O Virgin", enunciates John in the *sticheron* for Saturday's vespers (stich. II.28-29), "God vouchsafed to become incarnate through Thee in order to mold his own icon." In another *sticheron*, we read about the icon of the virginal bride drawn over the Red Sea (stich. III.22-23). In the *heirmos* of ode VII of the *Kanon on the Antipascha* (the Sunday after Easter), in the episode of the Three Hebrews, John speaks of the music that summoned people "to venerate the icon" (kan. V.77-78). Although the "icon" here refers to the golden idol, the terminology is vivid in the mind of Damaskenos.

To sum up, we may say tentatively that the system of (political) images used by Kosmas differed from that of John Damaskenos. Kosmas avoided the terminology of the icon, but was very eloquent in extolling the Cross. For Kosmas the Cross was the main instrument of earthly victory, whereas John saw in it the tool of the transcendental resurrection. The idea of the victory over the Arabs penetrated into the hymns of Kosmas, while this same theme left no traces in John's poetry.

### C. A commentator of Gregory of Nazianzus?

PG 38, 339-681

The twelfth-century manuscript Vat. gr. 1260 contains a work entitled *Collection and interpretation* (ἐξηγήσεις) of histories from the divine Scriptures and other poets and writers

which the saintly Gregory [of Nazianzus] mentioned in his verses. The author of this work is "Kosmas Hierosolymite, the admirer of Gregory".<sup>27</sup> The epithet, φιλογρηγόριος, literally "philo-Gregorian", applied also to Kosmas the Melode by one of his biographers,<sup>28</sup> infers that probably the compiler of the *lemma* identified the author of the work as the famous hymnographer. Already Prodomos had stated that Kosmas borrowed (or even "lifted") his wording from Gregory, though Prodomos considered such plagiarism legitimate and as serving the literary aim of adornment.<sup>29</sup> The identification became subsequently the conventional view. One exception to the prevailing opinion was advanced by T. Sinko who suggested that the man was not the bishop of Maiouma but Kosmas the Teacher,<sup>30</sup> since, as Sinko argues, the work was addressed not to an episcopal audience, but to "all the educated" (PG 38, 345.39). It is questionable whether the authorship of a medieval work can be established on such flimsy grounds, especially when there is every reason to assume that Kosmas the Teacher was only a legendary figure. Sinko's suggestion was rejected or ignored by the majority of scholars, and both Th. Detorakes and G. Menestrina have no doubts that the *Collection* is an authentic creation of the Melode. Their thesis, nevertheless, may be questionable.

The textual tradition provides us with no firm chronological evidence. It is usually assumed that Kosmas drew upon the commentaries on four speeches of Gregory produced by a certain Nonnos (pseudo-Nonnos) who lived in the sixth century in Palestine or Syria.<sup>31</sup> D. Accorinti suggested another date —the second half of the fifth century— and tentatively identified Nonnos as the famous author of the *Dionysiaka* and as the composer of the hexameters of the *Paraphrase of St. John*.<sup>32</sup> In any event, the date ca. 500 is the likely *terminus post quem* for the *Collection*. It is more difficult to calculate the *terminus post quem non*. According to E. Patzig, the so-called *scholia Clarkiana*, which survive in a manuscript of the tenth century and were published by Th. Gaisford<sup>33</sup> depend on Kosmas. The textual collation, however, led F. Lefherz to a different conclusion: the text of the

<sup>27</sup> On this text see G. MENESTRINA, Note al Commento di Cosma di Gerusalemme al 'Carmina' di Gregorio Nazianzeno, in C. MORESCHINI - G. MENESTRINA, *Gregorio Nazianzeno teologo e scrittore*, Bologna 1992, 217-226. It presents an analysis of the manuscript and suggests important emendations. Cf. C. CRIMI, Nazianzenica III: Sul testo del "Commentario" di Cosma, *Scritti classici e cristiani offerti a F. Corsaro*, Catania 1994, 183-187.

<sup>28</sup> Th. DETORAKES, Vie inédite de Cosmas le Mélode, *AB* 99, 1981, 115.284.

<sup>29</sup> Ed. STEVENSON, p. 33.28-34.2.

<sup>30</sup> T. SINKO, *De traditione orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni, II: De traditione indirecta*, Kracow 1923, 32 n. 1.

<sup>31</sup> E. PATZIG, *De Nonnianis in IV orationes Gregorii Nazianzeni commentariis*, Leipzig 1890, 14f.

<sup>32</sup> D. ACCORINTI, Sull'autore degli scoli mitologici alle orazioni di Gregorio di Nazianzo, *Byzantion* 60, 1990, 5-24. Cf. B. COULIE, L. F. SHERRY and CETEDOC, *Thesaurus Pseudo-Nonni, Paraphrasis evangelii secundum Iohannem*, Turnhout 1995, vii-ix.

<sup>33</sup> Th. GAISFORD, *Catalogus sive notitia manuscriptorum, qui a cel. E. D. Clarke comparati in Bibliotheca Bodleiana adservantur* I, Oxford 1812, 35ff.

scholiast sometimes coincides with that of Kosmas, sometimes deviates from it, but on the whole gives a clearer presentation of things confused by Kosmas.<sup>34</sup> Therefore we cannot exclude the possibility that both commentators were using a common source.

In his *Commentary* Kosmas deals with biblical themes and ancient mythology, history, and culture. His biblical discourses sometimes overlap with the topics of the hymns written by the Melode, in several cases deviating slightly from the hymnic presentation. The commentator does not mention Moses as frequently as the author of the hymns, but evokes him in contexts other than the military: Moses, he says, is praised in Holy Scripture together with Phineas and Elias (PG 38, 528.34-529.2); the daughter of the pharaoh proclaims Moses her son (col. 367.8-9); and he smites the rock with his wondrous staff (col. 390.35). In treating another traditional theme, that of the Three Hebrews, the commentator speaks of "the golden icon of the emperor" (col. 349.35), whereas the hymnographer seems to have avoided this phrase. The commentator also places emphasis on another detail: although the heroes refused to touch the food of "the imperial *trapeza*" they nonetheless looked more handsome and attractive than the young men brought up on the royal diet (col. 393.10-20, cf. 577.8-9). All in all it is possible to see certain differences between the two texts, but not contradictions.

More complex is the question of the classical literary heritage in the *Collection*. Kosmas acknowledges a certain similarity between the Bible and Greek literature and affirms that the Hellenes were accustomed to "extracting" episodes from the holy books and molding (καταπλάττειν) them into their myths: for instance, they transformed the biblical Noah into their Deucalion (col. 516.23-27). F. Trisoglio correctly stresses that Kosmas' knowledge of antiquity was limited and depended on pseudo-Nonnos (or a common source), that his presentation of antiquity is sometimes erroneous,<sup>35</sup> but that, in spite of this, the data are copious and the commentary includes such non traditional authors as Lucian, whose detailed description of a painting by Zeuxis is quoted word for word (col. 605f.). Of course, on account of the genre, the hymns of Kosmas are devoid of antique reference, although isolated words from the vocabulary of Homer and Aeschylus do occasionally appear in Kosmas' hymns.<sup>36</sup> What is probably noteworthy is the lack of any other philological work of this kind produced in the eighth century; moreover, the *Exegesis of the arcane words of Gregory the Theologian* compiled by Niketas-David ca. 900 limits itself to the field of the Old and New Testament, mentioning the "Hellenic philosophers" only in a very vague context.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> F. LEFHERZ, *Studien zu Gregor von Nazianzus*, Bonn 1958, 160.

<sup>35</sup> F. TRISOGLIO, *Mentalità ed atteggiamenti degli scolasti di fronte agli scritti di s. Gregorio di Nazianzo*, in J. MOSSEY (ed.), *II Symposium Nazianzenum*, Paderborn 1983, 210f.

<sup>36</sup> Th. DETORAKES, *Κλασσικαὶ ἀπηχήσεις εἰς τὴν βυζαντινὴν ὑμνογραφίαν*, *EEBS* 39-40, 1972/1973, 152f., 155.

<sup>37</sup> *Niceta David, Commento ai carmina arcana di Gregorio Nazianzeno*, ed. C. MORESCHINI-I. COSTA, Naples 1992, 104.11, 108.20, 152.14.

While none of this constitutes incontrovertible proof, it nevertheless points in certain directions. There are, indeed, some passages in the *Collection* that could fit much better the situation of the tenth century than that of the eighth. While describing the separation of Abraham and Lot (*Gen.* 13.8-12) the commentator says that Abraham conceded to Lot the "προτίμησις τῆς γῆς" (col. 355.23-24). In a wide sense, meaning the preferential right of property, the term *protimesis* is well known at least from the Justinianic legislation, but it was not until the tenth century, namely in the novel of Romanos I Lekapenos of 922<sup>38</sup>, that it became specifically connected to the land by its introduction in the agrarian legislation, where it acquired the strictly technical sense: (peasants') pre-emption right.<sup>39</sup>

In another passage, the commentator mentions the Colossus of Rhodes that was demolished by the Hagarenes "in the days of Constantine who was slaughtered in Syracuse of Sicily" (col. 534.14-17); he means Constans II, who was murdered in 668. The *Collection* therefore must have been written after 668, thus giving us a chronology that does not conflict with the traditional identification of the commentator as Kosmas the Melode. Immediately after this statement the writer relates a miracle, which involves an inverted case of crossing the sea. After reference to two biblical episodes, namely Moses' parting of the waters of the Red Sea and the Apostles' walking on the water, he turns to an enigmatic event that took place under a Constantine the Younger (ὁ νεός); he relates that there is a place in Thrace where the Goths arrive in their *monoxyla*, and the Thracians, on the other hand, frequently drag their boats across the dry land to "Gotthia." Constantine, he goes on to say, once drove his boats across the mainland, feat that was considered miraculous (col. 534.24-535.2).

We do not know who this "Younger", or "New", Constantine was. He could have been Constantine IV (668-85), the son of Constans II, but he may equally have been some other ruler. An iconoclast poem mentions "the New Constantine", the son of the emperor Leo (Constantine V or Symbatios-Constantine; see below, p. 296). Constantine VI (780-97) was expressly named the Younger (PG 95, 364D), and another Constantine the Younger appears in the eleventh-century *Miracles of Eugenios of Trebizond* by John Xiphilinos, in a chapter entitled "On the Rus".<sup>40</sup> The terms Thrace, Gotthia and *monoxyla* lead us also to a Russian context, or, at any rate, to the area of the Black Sea, where the *monoxyla* from "outer Rosia" traveled to Constantinople and were dragged across ground around the

<sup>38</sup> The novel is dated to 928 by N. SVORONOS, *Les nouvelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes*, Athens 1994 [National Hellenic Research Foundation. Institute for Byzantine Studies. Sources 1], 47, 59, 74f.

<sup>39</sup> See G. OSTROGORSKY, *The Peasant's Pre-Emption Right*, *JRS* 37, 1947, 117-126.

<sup>40</sup> J. O. ROSENQVIST, *The Hagiographic Dossier of St. Eugenios of Trebizond*, Uppsala 1996 [Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 5], 182.206. ROSENQVIST, *ibid.*, 376, identifies him "in all probability" as Constantine VIII; we would not exclude Constantine IX. "The idea of each new ruler as a new Constantine," formulates P. MAGDALINO, Introduction, in ID. (ed.), *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Aldershot

rapids of the Dnieper. This was a regularly traveled route, and it is so characterized in the commentary. But the miracle performed by Constantine the Younger must be different from the regular trade expeditions from Gotthia to Thrace. The only parallel that can be suggested is the legend about Prince Oleg who, according to the Kievan chronicle, besieged Constantinople in 907 and during the siege set his boats on wheels, thus causing apprehension among the Greeks.<sup>41</sup>

The story as told by the commentator is legendary, merging the regular itinerary of the "Gothic" *monoxyla* with the miraculous act of a Byzantine ruler (possibly transformed by the Kievan chronicler into a wonder performed by Oleg). The emperor of the time was Leo VI, but his heir, Constantine VII (the Younger?), had already been born, and the hazy knowledge of Kosmas may have confused the father and the younger Constantine. As in the case of the term *protimesis* above, the episode seems to carry more associations with the tenth century than the eighth. The data are not sufficient to delineate the precise development of events, but they give rise to serious doubts about the attribution of the commentary to the Melode. This Kosmas of Jerusalem may in fact be another person altogether. A certain Kosmas of Jerusalem was on the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in 1075-81, and one cannot exclude the likelihood that yet another Kosmas of Jerusalem attentively read Gregory the Theologian in the second half of the tenth century.<sup>42</sup>

We have already remarked that Kosmas was interested in the classical heritage. Naturally, Christian knowledge is for him higher than the Hellenic wisdom which, he says, is "as fragile as a cobweb" (col. 376.1), but he praises learning by stressing the power of speech which distinguishes man from beast (col. 662.1). Moreover, he approves of rhetoric which gives force to public speeches, judicial decisions and panegyrics; of historiography which provides one with wisdom of many (σοφία πολλῶν) and the conjectures of intellect (νοῦς ὑποθέσεων); and of grammar which trains the mind and eradicates barbarisms (l. 13-20). He proposes the categorization of knowledge, dividing philosophy into practical and theoretical, with theoretical philosophy encompassing physiology, mathematics (consisting, in its turn, of arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy) and contemplation (θεωρητικόν), and practical philosophy comprising ethics, economy and politics, the latter being divided into legislative and judicial (col. 535.12-19). Kosmas' knowledge is naturally

1994 [Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications 2], 3, "was implicit in the dynastic succession." See also M. GALLINA, 'Novus Constantinus'-Νέος Κωνσταντῖνος. Temi di memoria costantiniana nella propaganda imperiale a Bisanzio, *Università di Macerata. Annali della Facoltà di lettere e di filosofia* 27, 1994, 35-56.

<sup>41</sup> For another interpretation of the passage, its chronological and geographical data see C. ZUCKERMANN, A Gothia in the Hellespont in the Early Eighth Century, *BMGS* 19, 1995, 234-241; J. HALDON, Kosmas of Jerusalem and the Gotthograikoi, *BS* 56/1, 1995, 45-54.

<sup>42</sup> A. KAZHDAN, Kosmas of Jerusalem 3: The Exegesis of Gregory of Nazianzus, *Byzantion* 61, 1991, 396-412. For another view, beside Zuckermann's and Haldon's articles cited above, see, C. CRIMI - K. DEMOEN, Sulla cronologia del Commentario di Cosma di Gerusalemme ai Carmi di Gregorio Nazianzeno, *Byzantion* 67, 1997, 360-374.

colored by Christian views: thus, philosophy is not intended to deal with ancient men of wisdom (he cites the names of Sextus, Pyrrhon, Chrysippos and Plato), but with things divine, concerning which he draws attention to three major paradoxes, namely, the Trinity, divided and united at the same time, the passions of Christ (perfect God), and the world which, at one and the same time, is stable and mutable (col. 601.18-25). The philosopher, for Kosmas, is a saintly person, who is not afraid of poverty (lit. "nakedness") or persecution (the writer makes specific mention of cliffs, whips and swords), is unmoved by flattery, wealth and luxurious living, and has never been involved in trade or gourmandise (col. 563.12-20).

Kosmas' ethics are as Christian as his philosophy. The ancients, he says with indignation, set wealth above all other things, and considered the poor man extremely unhappy (col. 567.20-23), whereas Gregory thought that it was better to live in poverty and freedom than to administer riches in a bad way (l. 32-33). Another passage, however, allows us to assume a degree of flexibility in Kosmas' treatment of wealth: he tells, in reference to 1 *Esdras* 3-4, of a debate at the Persian court (under Cyrus, whereas *Esdras* has Dareios; there are other deviations from the biblical text in the commentary) where three young eunuchs were asked to name the three most powerful things: the first of them said wine, another women, and the last truth. Gregory, declaring the last man wise, adds, however, that gold is even mightier, and the commentator dutifully shares his opinion (col. 609f.).

The commentator's interest in the subject of sex is peculiar. He praises virginity (col. 831.25-27), but he knows that sexual desire is a product of nature, and explains that this desire comes in two forms, illicit and prudent (i.e. restricted to marriage). Kosmas refers to the exemplary behavior of sea fish which, in his words, adhere to marital fidelity (col. 640.11-17), of birds which (with the exception of crows) strictly observe family ties (col. 359.28-34), and of dolphins (col. 661.27-28). All this may sound somewhat banal, but above the banality is the surprising frequency with which sexual topics occur in the *Commentary*: the Laconians raped the girls of Skedasos in Leuctrae (col. 622.2); Epaminodas was enslaved by his sexual drive and other vices (l. 24-25); in one night Heracles had intercourse with the fifty daughters of Thestios (who then produced fifty sons), the proverbial "thirteenth labor of Heracles" (col. 623.23-28); Phanes, endowed with a displaced membrum virile, possessed enormous sexual power (col. 628.18-20). Prostitutes, both biblical (e.g., col. 377.34, 424f., 437.12-15, 485.19-23) and belonging to the Greek past, are mentioned many times; it is noteworthy that, when quoting a passage of *Judices* 11.1, Kosmas replaces the biblical harlot, πόρνη, with a concubine, παλλακή (col. 543.31). Lais, a harlot of Corinth, so strongly attracted noblemen from all over Greece that they dedicated "icons" to her, and worshipped her in shrines and public squares (col. 585.1-6). The Trojan war was waged because of the harlot Helen (col. 375.16-19). Herod committed adultery with his brother's wife (col. 379.21). And so on and so forth.

Kosmas' treatise is not an attempt to evaluate Gregory's poetry but an exegetic work, an explanation of phenomena and words (col. 343.29). In the preamble, however, Kosmas

praises "the beautiful order (εὐκοσμία)" of Gregory's verses, and the harmony of their composition (col. 343.32-33). He then enumerates three aspects of Gregory's poetry that are of importance for the reader: first, "the developed vocabulary and the muse of eloquence (πεῖραν τῶν λέξεων καὶ καλλιπειρίας τὴν μουσαν)", then the broad vision of the world, both heavenly and earthly, and finally the art of story-telling (the "sharpness" of verses, diversity of tales), strangely associated by Kosmas with Providence and divine clemency, God's love toward humanity (col. 346.1-24). Three aspects —narration, description and rendering in words— are evidently borrowed from ancient literary theory, but Kosmas introduces a new, Christian, mystical element into his account of literary esthetics: "If someone, fond of Gregory's works, speaks of him or treats him favorably, he speaks of and treats Christ; the glory is Christ's." And in a passage slightly further down: "Whoever talks of Gregory's *œuvre*, talks of Christ" (col. 343.12-19). In other words, the real author of the Nazianzene poems is God.

When Kosmas turns to himself and his commentary, he naturally employs the topos of modesty: he compares his *Commentary* with an earthenware jar containing the sweetest honey or a piece of cheap fabric picked from a dung heap (κοπιωσύλλεκτος, this compound is a *hapax*) that wraps [a nugget of] gold (col. 344.25-28). With somewhat more dignity, he compares his task with diving into the depth of the sea in search of a pearl that will make earthly kings happy (col. 341.1-8). But expressed in plain words, his task consisted in setting forth Gregory's discourses in greater detail (πλατυτέως), in comparing (παρεμβάλλειν) and expounding (σχεδιάζειν) them (col. 344.1-7). The verb σχεδιάζω in classical Greek meant "improvise". It is difficult to imagine, however, that Kosmas was characterizing his work as improvisation, but only by the eleventh century the word σχέδη began to signify a play of literary compositions on a fixed theme popular with intellectuals. It is attractive to speculate that Kosmas, in the eighth century, foreshadowed the later meaning of the term.

#### D. Some more hymns

Besides the foursome of great hymnographers little has survived from the religious poetry of the time.

1. *Wolfenbüttel Hymns*. These four anonymous hymns with their superscriptions survived in the Guelferbytanus codex. They are dated, on paleographical grounds, to the early eighth century,<sup>43</sup> and contain eulogies of the Trinity, Christ and the Virgin.

<sup>43</sup> E. R. SMOTHERS, *Four Greek Hymns, Mélanges J. de Ghellink I*, Gembloux 1951, 321-344.

2. *Kyprianos*. Nothing certain is known about this poet's biography.<sup>44</sup> It has been suggested that John Damaskenos and Germanos used metrical and melodic themes from a work of his; if the suggestion is correct, he must have lived no later than the first half of the eighth century. The hypotheses that he was a monk in Mar-Saba Lavra or in the Stoudite monastery can be neither substantiated nor refuted. G. Schirò considers him the inventor of the *syntomon-sticheron*, a poetic form, mostly of four or five strophes, inserted between other liturgical pieces.<sup>45</sup> As in many other cases, it remains doubtful whether all the hymns attributed to Kyprianos (or Kyprianos the Monk, or the Stoudite) were penned by the same man; some of them are ascribed in manuscripts both to him and to other poets.

3. *John of the Ancient Lavra*. This enigmatic figure was a monk and priest who was eventually proclaimed a saint. He must have lived in the second half of the eighth century, since Theophanes Graptos praised him. Possibly, he authored a *Kanon for St. Chariton*, when he dwelt in the monastery of Chariton before joining the Ancient Lavra.<sup>46</sup>

4. *Elias the Synkellos*. He is the author of two iambic alphabetically structured poems: an *Anacreontic of Contrition* and a *Lament on Himself*.<sup>47</sup> The approximate dates of his life are still under discussion. Th. Nissen, basing his dating on the index of poets in cod. Barberinus gr. 310 which positions Elias between Sophronios of Jerusalem and Michael Synkellos, places him in the eighth century; on the other hand, a certain Elias, the *synkellos* of the patriarch of Jerusalem, attended the council of Constantinople in 869/70 and must therefore have lived in the mid-ninth century. There is, however, no evidence of his literary activity, and Elias was not a rare name in Palestine. The poems by Elias, although religious in content, do not belong to hymnography proper.

5. *Anatolios, Byzantios, Babylas, George bishop of Syracuse, Gregory of Syracuse*. These are the names of obscure poets who presumably flourished in the seventh century. George bishop of Syracuse was allegedly slain by the Arabs in 669 and should be distinguished from George Sikeliotas who lived in the seventh or eighth centuries.<sup>48</sup>

Another (?) *George*, the author of hymns for the Virgin and John Chrysostom, possibly flourished in the second half of the seventh century, but the later period cannot be excluded.<sup>49</sup> The melode *Gregory* (author of *kontakia* for the Sicilian saint Marcian/

<sup>44</sup> See a survey of opinions in M. CAPELLI ARATA, *Some Notes on Cyprian the Hymnographer, Studies in Eastern Chant 5*, Crestwood NY 1990, 123-136. Cf. SZÖVERFFY, *Hymnography* 2, 18.

<sup>45</sup> G. SCHIRÒ, *Lineamenti storici sulla genesi e lo sviluppo del Syntomon: Cipriano il melodo, BollBadGr 3*, 1949, 141-146.

<sup>46</sup> S. VAILHÉ - S. PETRIDÈS, *Saint Jean le Paléolaurite, ROC 9*, 1904, 491-511.

<sup>47</sup> Th. NISSEN, *Die byzantinischen Anakreonten*, Munich 1940, 46; BECK, *Kirche*, 604; HUNGER, *Literatur* 2, 94 and 159f.

<sup>48</sup> See BECK, *Kirche*, 472f.

<sup>49</sup> D. KALAMAKES, *Ἀγιολογικοὶ ὕμνοι ἀνωνύμων ποιητῶν, Parnassos 36*, 1994, 424f.



Markianos, for Niketas the Goth, and for Luke the Evangelist) may conjecturally be identified as Gregory of Syracuse, a poet of the second half of the seventh century.<sup>50</sup>

The *Vita of Epiphanius of Salamis* (Constantia) on Cyprus, allegedly written by two of his pupils, John and (following the death of Epiphanius) Polybios, bishop of Rhinokouroura in Egypt,<sup>51</sup> is a pretentious romance virtually devoid of any historical truth<sup>52</sup>. The *vita* is full of anachronisms, but it cannot be later than the seventh century when its Coptic translation was produced. A hymn or two (which originally had nothing to do with Epiphanius) are incorporated in the text as if it (they?) were written in prose<sup>53</sup>. They may be a work of the seventh century as well. This case aptly illustrates how thin the borderline could be between the hagiographical and hymnographical genres.

<sup>50</sup> E. MIONI, I "kontakia" di Gregorio di Siracusa, *BollBadGr* 1, 1947, 202-209.

<sup>51</sup> BHG 596-597, ed. G. DINDORF, *Epiphani ep. Constantiae opera* 1, Leipzig 1859, 3-78. See also, C. RAPP, Epiphanius of Salamis: the Church Father as Saint, in A. A. M. BRYER-G. I. GEORGHALLIDES (eds.), *The Sweet Land of Cyprus. Papers given at the Twenty-fifth Jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies. Birmingham March 1991*, Nikosia 1993, 169-188, and C. RAPP, Der heilige Epiphanius im Kampf mit dem Dämon des Origenes. Kritische Erstausgabe des Wunders BHG 601i, *Symbolae Berolinenses*, Amsterdam 1993, 455-461; C. RAPP is currently preparing a new edition of the *vita*.

<sup>52</sup> H. DELEHAYE, Saints de Chypre, *AB* 26, 1907, 242f.

<sup>53</sup> C. RAPP, Frühbyzantinische Dichtung und Hagiographie am Beispiel der *Vita* des Epiphanius von Zypern, *RSBN* 27, 1990, 3-31; cf. P. SPECK, Ein gleichzeitiger Hymnos angeblich auf den heiligen Epiphanius, *Varia* V, Bonn 1994 [Poikila byzantina 13], 261-286.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE MEDIEVAL CONSTANTINE-LEGEND

#### *A. The starting point: Eusebios of Caesarea, 'Vita Constantini'*

Ed. F. WINKELMANN, *Eusebios Werke* I,1, Berlin 1975; Engl. tr. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ser. II, vol. 1, Grand Rapids Mich. 1971, 405-559

Constantine the Great died in 337, and immediately after his death one of the greatest theologians of the fourth century, Eusebios of Caesarea, wrote his biography. The heated debate on the authenticity of this text has now abated,<sup>1</sup> and inconsistencies in the text are usually explained by the assumption that Eusebios left his work unfinished rather than by his ideological biases. Fortunately, the problem of credibility does not directly concern our history of Byzantine literature: it is sufficient to know that the text existed in the fourth century, and that following generations could not ignore it when writing on Constantine.<sup>2</sup>

Eusebios the writer moved between antique and medieval approaches. As historian writing in the classical tradition he stressed his personal involvement in the events described and his close acquaintance with the emperor he was extolling (again, it is of little relevance for our purposes whether he exaggerated this closeness or not), and considered it extremely important to prove his point by citing numerous documents (whether authentic or not). On the other hand, his interpretation of history is medieval and

<sup>1</sup> F. WITTINGHOFF, Eusebios als Verfasser der 'Vita Constantini', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 96, 1953, 330-373; F. WINKELMANN, Zur Geschichte des Authentizitätsproblems der Vita Constantini, *Klio* 40, 1962, 187-243.

<sup>2</sup> On Eusebios' *Vita* see T. D. BARNES, *Constantine and Eusebios*, Cambridge Mass-London 1981, 265-271; cf. H. A. DRAKE, What Eusebios Knew: the Genesis of the Vita Constantini, *Classical Philology* 83, 1988, 20-38; G. FOWDEN, The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and their Influence, *JRS* 84, 1994, 146-170. The literature on Eusebios' *vita* is vast, and no attempt is made here to give a comprehensive bibliography.

teleological: Constantine acts in the *vita* not as a human being but as an instrument of divine will, each step of his career being determined either by God's plan or by his own piety, in itself a divine gift. The Eusebian Constantine is not a real personality but an ideal type, a personification of all virtues. Moreover, he acts as a lone defender of the Christian faith and Christian state, surrounded by anonymous adversaries and collaborators.<sup>3</sup>

However, these elements —antique and medieval— are not consistently present in the same book. While Eusebios is a participant in events and a close eyewitness, he nevertheless assumes a figure of modesty, so characteristic of medieval hagiographers. More importantly, his teleology is generally consistent, though somewhat unorthodox. In Christian stories about holy men and women, the deeds of saintly martyrs are crowned by victory, but a victory that is transcendental: after physically harrowing tortures and a cruel death the saintly hero ascends to Heaven, to be joyfully received by the chorus of his or her predecessors. But Eusebios' Constantine not only achieves immortality and splendor in Heaven, clad in a radiant robe of light, but he triumphantly struts about on earth. His piety brings him victories in wars over pagan tyrants and pagan barbarians,<sup>4</sup> and he remains robust and healthy until old age, while his adversaries perish in the grips of hideous diseases.

Eusebios is absolutely earnest in his methodical treatment of the events that lead Constantine toward the ideal Christian state, and in establishing the authenticity of these facts and events. His presentation is black-and-white, lacking psychological subtlety, plain and straightforward, and almost devoid of anecdotes, parables or characterization. His *ekphraseis* extend to church buildings only. There is no place in his narrative for matters erotic. Even apparitions and visions appear only infrequently in his account and are treated matter-of-factly, as natural phenomena rather than extraordinary events; and there is no *divertissement* in the scarce miracles of the *vita*, nor evidence of literary depth in the dutiful recitation of biblical episodes.

The image of Constantine continued to stimulate the fascination of Christians<sup>5</sup> and pagans<sup>6</sup> alike, both in Byzantium and the West.<sup>7</sup> At a certain point in time, however, a

<sup>3</sup> See R. T. RIDLEY, Anonymity in the Vita Constantini, *Byzantion* 50, 1980, 241-258.

<sup>4</sup> As R. H. STORCH, The 'Eusebian Constantine', *Church History* 40, 1971, 145f., puts it, in the *vita* "the most important indication of divine favor for a pious ruler is military victory."

<sup>5</sup> See E. T. BRETT, Early Constantine Legends: a Study in Propaganda, *BS/EB* 10, 1983, 52-70; M. MAZZA, Costantino nella storiografia ecclesiastica (dopo Eusebio), in G. BONAMENTE-F. FUSCO (eds.), *Costantino il Grande* II/2, Macerata 1992-1993, 659-692.

<sup>6</sup> F. PASCHOD, Zosime 2,29 et la version païenne de la conversion de Constantin, *Historia* 20, 1971, 334-353; G. ZUCHELLI, La propaganda anticostantiniana e la falsificazione storica in Zosimo, *I canali della propaganda nel mondo antico*, Milan 1976, 229-251. The pagan treatise on Constantine by a certain Praxagoras of Athens (W. ENSSLIN, *RE* 22, 1954, 1743) is lost, but Photios has provided us with a summary of it in cod. 62 of his *Bibliotheca*.

<sup>7</sup> E. EWIG, Das Bild Constantins des Großen in den ersten Jahrhunderten des abendländischen Mittelalters, *Historisches Jahrbuch* 75, 1956, 1-46, repr. in ID., *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*,

medieval legend of Constantine came into being that differs substantially from the biography created by Eusebios.<sup>8</sup> It differs not only in content and verisimilitude but also in manner of presentation.

### B. The legendary Vita (BHG 362-369n)

F. Halkin counted twenty-five Greek *vitae* and panegyrics devoted to Constantine.<sup>9</sup> The oldest is a palimpsest dated ca. 800 which preserves a short fragment from a *Vita* of Constantine.<sup>10</sup> F. Winkermann, however, suggests that the original text ("Grundvita") is much older and was compiled before the seventh century, perhaps as early as the fifth.<sup>11</sup> But Winkermann's arguments are *ex silentio*: in this text, he suggests, one might have expected allusions to the major issues of the day, but the hagiographer avoids mentioning either Iconoclasm or the crisis of the imperial institutions or the external threat that was so acute in the seventh and eighth centuries. But Winkermann perhaps demands too much of a hagiographical compilation. Certainly, some authors made allusions to, or hinted at, contemporary political and ideological struggles, but it would be a hazardous enterprise indeed to date all hagiographical texts devoid of such features to the period before Iconoclasm and the Arab invasions.

Whatever the date of the "ancient" *vita* published by Winkermann, it provides us with only a brief account of Constantine's life, including the foundation of Constantinople, the discovery of the Cross by Helena, the Council of Nicaea, the death of Crispus, and Constantine's own death and interment. Much richer in data are three other *vitae* to which,

Munich 1976, 72-113; V. AIELLO, Aspetti del mito di Costantino in occidente, *Università di Macerata. Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia* 21, 1988, 87-116; Th. GRÜNEWALD, 'Constantinus novus': zum Konstantin-Bild des Mittelalters, in G. BONAMENTE-F. FUSCO (eds.), *Costantino il Grande* I, Macerata 1992, 461-493.

<sup>8</sup> A. P. KAZHDAN, 'Constantin imaginaire.' Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great, *Byzantion* 57, 1987, 196-250.

<sup>9</sup> F. HALKIN, Une nouvelle vie de Constantin dans un légendier de Patmos, *AB* 77, 1959, repr. in ID., *Études d'épigraphie grecque et d'hagiographie byzantine*, London 1973, pt. XIII, 70 n. 8.

<sup>10</sup> F. WINKELMANN, Die vormetaphrastischen griechischen hagiographischen vitae Constantini Magni, *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines (Ochride, 10-16 septembre 1961)* 2, Belgrade 1964, 408 n. 17. Some of Winkermann's works on this subject are collected in ID., *Studien zu Konstantin dem Großen und zur byzantinischen Kirchengeschichte*, Birmingham 1993, pts. XII-XIV.

<sup>11</sup> F. WINKELMANN, Die älteste erhaltene griechische hagiographische vita Konstantins und Helenas (BHG Nr. 365z, 366, 366a), in J. IRMSCHER-F. PASCHKE-K. TREU (eds.), *Texte und Textkritik*, Berlin 1987 [TU 13] 630f.

for the sake of convenience, we shall refer not by their BHG number but by the name of their editor or by the locality of the manuscript: the Guidi-legend, the Opitz-legend and the Patmos-legend.

Winkermann distinguishes two versions of the Guidi-legend (BHG 364),<sup>12</sup> the earliest of which he dates to after 820, probably the end of the ninth century. A. M. Schneider suggested that the Guidi-legend (the most popular of all Constantine-legends) was derived from a prototext of the seventh century, basing his dating on the hagiographer's allusion to an inscription of the emperor Herakleios that had survived until the hagiographer's own day.<sup>13</sup> The suggestion is attractive though not absolutely convincing, for the inscription could have survived longer than one century. If Winkermann is correct in assuming that the hagiographer used Theophanes, his dating of the Guidi-legend acquires additional support.

The second *vita*, essential for the study of the development of the medieval image of Constantine, is the Opitz-legend (BHG 365).<sup>14</sup> Winkermann places this *vita* between the end of the ninth and the eleventh century. The third text of major importance is the Patmos-legend (BHG 365n) preserved in a single manuscript of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.<sup>15</sup> As it mentions the death of the patriarch Germanos it cannot be earlier than the 730s, but since it makes Germanos a contemporary of Constantine it seems preferable to accept a much later date for its compilation. F. Halkin and Winkermann dated the Patmos-legend to the ninth or tenth century.

Some elements of the Constantine-legend were included in a number of *vitae* of other saints. One of them is the *Passio of St. Eusignios*<sup>16</sup>. Its Coptic translation appeared before 995/6, which means the original must be of an earlier date. The author of the earlier *Martyrion of St. Artemios* mentions "the pious and most august Constantine" only in passing.<sup>17</sup> The second version, however, contains an entire paragraph dedicated to Constantine —unfortunately we do not know by whom the text was compiled, or when. The text was revised by Symeon Metaphrastes and must have been written before the

<sup>12</sup> M. GUIDI, *Un Bios di Costantino*, Rome 1908; see WINKERMANN, Die vormetaphrastischen vitae, 406f. Eng. tr. S. LIEU-D. MONTERRAT (eds.), *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views*, London-New York 1996, 97-146.

<sup>13</sup> A. M. SCHNEIDER, Zur Datierung der vita Constantini et Helenae, *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 40, 1941, 245-249.

<sup>14</sup> H. OPITZ, Die vita Constantini des codex Angelicus 22, *Byzantion* 9, 1934, 535-593, additions by F. HALKIN, L'empereur Constantin converti par Euphratas, *AB* 78, 1960, repr. in ID., *Études d'épigraphie*, pt. XIV, 6-8, 11-15; see F. WINKERMANN, Das hagiographische Bild Konstantins I. in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit, *Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte im 9.-11. Jahrhundert*, Praha 1978, 179-203.

<sup>15</sup> HALKIN, Une nouvelle vie, 73-105, 371f.

<sup>16</sup> P. DEVOS, Une recension nouvelle de la passion grecque BHG 639 de s. Eusignios, *AB* 100, 1982, 213-228.

<sup>17</sup> PHILOSTORGIOS, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. J. BIDEZ - F. WINKERMANN, Berlin 1972, appendix III: 166.10.

tenth century; some manuscripts make Damaskenos its author (see above, p. 77). Another work of this group is the *vita* of Metrophanes and Alexander, two bishops of Constantinople of the first half of the fourth century. The earliest manuscript of this *vita* is of the ninth or tenth century. Winkermann conjectures that the *vita* could have been created in the fifth century, but such an early date is unlikely, not only because the hagiographer used Gelasios of Kyzikos, who wrote after 475, but also because he endows Constantine with the title of *autokrator* of the *Rhomaioi*, a formula attested only once before 800, on the signature of the synodal acts of 680, whose transmission is uncertain.<sup>18</sup>

Of all the texts connected with the Constantine-legend, the *Acts of Silvester, pope of Rome*,<sup>19</sup> were the first to draw the attention of scholars. Nonetheless, the origin of this text remains unclear. The *Acts* were known to Malalas who ascribes Constantine's baptism to Silvester; in the sixth century, indeed, the legend existed both in Syria and in Rome. Precisely when it reached Constantinople, however, remains uncertain. The first undisputed mention of the Silvester-story in a Constantinopolitan milieu is to be found in an epistle sent by Pope Hadrian (772-95) to Constantine VI and his mother Irene.<sup>20</sup> Theophanes (17.24-28 and 33.21-22) merely mentions that Constantine was baptized by Silvester, but half a century later George the Monk borrowed abundantly from this story; the Patmos-legend expressly refers to the *Vita of our holy father Silvester, Pope of Rome*.

Late Roman historians (including Malalas, Theodore Anagnostes and the *Paschal Chronicle*) naturally wrote much about Constantine, and the world chronicles of the ninth and tenth centuries also contain some elements of the Constantine-legend.

Even though the dating of some of these texts is far from certain, it is possible to observe that most "medieval" Greek legends of Constantine the Great were compiled around the ninth century. Since they usually relate discrete elements of the legend, the core story must have preceded the ninth century; there is no need to assume that it existed, at any point in time, in the form of a cohesive entity, encompassing all the elements which have survived in the various *vitae*. Indeed, it may even have existed in oral versions. Be this as it may, the volume of "information" in use in the eighth century, before the work of the ninth-century hagiographers, significantly exceeds that available around 600 (even though some of these episodes are to be found in some post-Eusebian writings).

<sup>18</sup> On this formula see F. DÖLGER, *Byzantinische Diplomatie*, Ettal 1956, 135 n. 34; P. CLASSEN, 'Romanorum gubernans imperium', *DA* 9, 1952, 115f.; G. RÖSCH, *Ὁνομα βασιλείας*, Vienna 1978 [Byzantina Vindobonensia X], 35f.

<sup>19</sup> F. COMBEFIS, *Illustrium Christi martyrum lecti triumpho*, Paris 1660, 258-336.

<sup>20</sup> MANSI XII, 1055-1059; see also the so-called *Letter to Theophilos* (PG 95, 364D, 380BC).

### C. The imaginary Constantine

We shall now attempt to analyze the legend as an entity, whose parts are scattered across numerous hagiographical texts (*membra disiecta*) and are now available only as independent "lays".

The story begins with Constantine's birth. The Guidi-legend narrates: Constans (i.e. Constantius Chlorus), the manly and invincible *tribunus*, on his way to Persia stayed overnight at an inn in the town of Drepanon. He asked for a harlot, and the innkeeper sent him his own daughter, Helena. Constans slept with her and gave her a purple dress as a reward. Many years passed, and Constans, now risen to the rank of *augustus*, sent some courtiers to Persia. They passed by Drepanon and met Helena's son, Constantine, who boasted of his imperial origin. They laughed at the boy but became serious at seeing the purple dress and reported the event to the emperor who demanded that Constantine be brought to his court. Similar stories are narrated in the Patmos-legend and in the *Vita of Eusignios*.

Eusebios makes no reference to the "shameful" origin of Constantine which does, by the way, have a parallel in the seventh-century *Vita of Theodore of Sykeon*, who was also a son of a prostitute in a small township. He describes, however, his hero's visit to the court of Diocletian, where the "tyrants" plotted against him, but he managed to flee to his father. The Guidi-legend and the *Vita of Metrophanes and Alexander* treat this theme with moderation, but in the Patmos-legend the narrative acquires a more lively character. It was customary, relates the hagiographer, for the emperor to come to a "theater" to perform the ritual killing of a bear and a lion (whose fangs and claws had prudently been removed) and to fight with thirty men armed with dry sponges. The ruler, Galerius, was afraid of such a contest and refused to enter the arena; he commissioned instead Constantine, who slaughtered the beasts and dispersed the men, even though they pelted him not with sponges but stones.<sup>21</sup> Then he fled to escape Galerius' envy and wrath.

The third and most important element of the legend of Constantine is his conversion<sup>22</sup> and the role of the Cross in the event. By 600, there were at least three different tales of Constantine's conversion: the traditional, "Eusebian" story of the vision on the eve of the battle at the Milvian bridge, presented in Theodore Anagnostes and in

<sup>21</sup> There is a striking similarity between this story and the legend of Constantine V, the killer of lions, reported already in the *Gesta episcoporum Neapolitanorum* (MGH SRL, 428f.), probably a contemporary text, and known to some Armenian authors, beginning with Lewond, also a contemporary. On this legend see, I. ROCHOW, *Kaiser Konstantin V. (741-775). Materialien zu seinem Leben und Nachleben*, Frankfurt a.M. 1994 [Berliner Byzantinische Studien 1], 127f. It is difficult to judge whether the similarity is mere coincidence or not.

<sup>22</sup> S. CALDERONE, Letteratura costantiniana e 'conversione' di Costantino, in G. BONAMENTE-F. FUSCO (eds.), *Costantino il Grande* 1, Macerata 1992, 231-252, deals only with earlier authors.

the first version of the *Paschal Chronicle*; the conversion after the foundation of Constantinople (the second version of the *Paschal Chronicle*), and Malalas' story about Constantine's defeat by barbarians and his rescue by the Cross. While Byzantine chroniclers clung to the first, traditional tale, hagiographers' treatment of the theme is more intricate. The author of the Guidi-legend develops traditional episodes, supplementing Eusebios with some insignificant details. He speaks, however, about three other battles won with the help of the Cross (including the victory over Byzantium), about a trio of bronze crosses constructed by order of the emperor and given holy names —Jesus, Christ and Victory— and he revises the story of Helena's mission to Jerusalem by increasing (compared with the similar episode in Theophanes) the role of Constantine in the discovery of the Holy Cross.

The author of the Opitz-legend develops the theme of the Cross as follows. Before the main vision (on the eve of the battle at the Milvian Bridge) Constantine had a dream in which he saw a giant formed entirely of light who struck him such a blow that his nostrils started to bleed; Constantine wiped his nose with a kerchief, which miraculously acquired the image of the Holy Cross. The Patmos-legend elaborates upon the victory over the barbarians on the "Danoubis" mentioned by Theophanes and ascribed to the Cross in the Guidi-legend. The barbarians, says the hagiographer, tried to cross the Danube and to plunder "the land of Brettanon (sic!)", and the emperor decided to repel their invasion; at night he saw a Cross shining on high, with an inscription of stars saying "By this conquer." In the morning he attacked the enemies and defeated them using his sword as a cross. Eventually with the help of "the divine Cross", he conquered the nations in the North and West all the way to the Ocean.

The *Vita of Eusignios* differs from most of the Constantinian tales in that it omits the story of the emperor's expedition against Rome and the battle at the Milvian Bridge. It narrates instead, that Constantine, at that time a simple *komes*, warred against the inhabitants of Byzantium; his actions were unsuccessful, he was losing soldiers, and when he pitched his tent at the place "where the Forum of Constantine is now" (at the very center of the city!) he was greatly distressed. The Byzantines, says Eusignios, allegedly an eyewitness of the events, were ready to strike a decisive blow and to take "us" captive. At that moment of deep frustration Constantine saw in the sky a Cross made of stars with the famous words "By this conquer". Constantine made a cross of wood and defeated the enemy. The vision of the Cross reappears once more, this time in connection with Constantine's victory over barbarians at the Danube.

Thus the Cross evidently attracted the attention of the legend-tellers. The elements of the legend varied, some being derived from Church historians of the fourth and fifth centuries while others were the product of folklore. The story of Helena's discovery of the Cross appears to be the most conservative element of the legend; the creativity of hagiographers was channeled primarily toward the role of the Cross as the vehicle of military success. Even the description of the vision at the walls of Rome is made with various touches reflecting the creative work of unknown authors, and the victory at the

Danube found a place in all major *vitae*, excepting the Opitz-legend, which touches instead on the victory over Germanic tribes, Sarmatians and Goths (a topic common with Theophanes). The battle against the Byzantines is related in the Guidi-legend and in the *Vita of Eusignios*.

The *vitae* of Constantine emphasize the role of the Cross in warfare, but they are surprisingly unconcerned with icons. Probably the only passage in which icons proper, and not "portraits" or "effigies", are mentioned is in the tale of Pope Silvester. According to the Guidi-legend, Constantine, after having seen in a vision Peter and Paul, who tried to persuade him to convert to Christianity, asked the pope to show him their icons so that he could be convinced that the people in his dream were really the Christian apostles. The episode is drawn from the *Acts of Silvester*, a text of Roman or Syriac origin.

The next aspect of the Constantine-legend—Constantine's providential rescue from Persian captivity—is enigmatic and has no precedent in either Eusebios or his continuators. Eusignios again is presented as an eyewitness to the event: Constantine was taken captive and put in fetters by the Persians who wished to sacrifice him "on the altar of their abomination" but Eusignios chanced to save the emperor. The complete episode is conveyed in the *Vita of Eusignios*, and the Patmos-legend contains it with a direct reference to Eusignios; the Guidi-legend, too, contains the same story but without the reference.

The story of the foundation of Constantinople occupies a prominent place in the legend. The episode has simple contours in the *Vita of Eusignios*. Some *vitae* (the Opitz- and Guidi-legends) followed the tradition represented by Theodore Anagnostes, according to whom Constantine planned to found the city close to Troy, but God in a dream commanded him to change location and go to Byzantium. Both hagiographers describe how Constantine studied the area and concluded that the position of the land and coastline were perfect. The Patmos-legend develops the theme further: even before the battle at the Milvian Bridge, Christ appeared to Constantine and instructed him to build a city in honor of the Virgin Mary in the eastern regions. The emperor tried to build the city in Thessalonike, then in Chalcedon, but eagles snatched up the possessions of a laborer and threw them on the site of Byzantium. By this miracle he understood where the city should be built.

According to the Patmos-legend, Constantine appointed one of his servants, Euphratas, to oversee the construction of his city. The figure of Euphratas has a remarkable place in the life of the legendary Constantine. It was he who came to Constantine (in the Opitz-legend) on the eve of the battle at the Milvian Bridge and advised the emperor to forsake idolatry and venerate the true God and his son Christ. Constantine followed his advice and won the day. Another function of Euphratas is treated at length in the Patmos-legend, where he appears as the major architect of Constantinople. The Patmos-legend informs us even about Euphratas' death before which he built a church near the Thracian wall and established there a home for the poor.

Another person to whom the legend assigns a leading role in the conversion of Constantine is Pope Silvester. It is no accident that the Patmos-legend, so generous to Euphratas, remained silent about his rival Silvester and limited itself to just one reference

to the *Acts of St. Silvester* by whom Constantine was granted holy baptism. The *Acts of Silvester* elaborate the role of the pope: the author pictures Constantine as a pagan who was forcing Christians to worship idols and who, when infected by leprosy, prepared to sacrifice children in order to be healed by their blood. A vision of Peter and Paul stopped the bloodbath, the pagan emperor converted, and Silvester baptized him. The elements of this story reappear in both the Opitz- and Guidi-legends, as well as in some chronicles of the ninth and tenth centuries.

The legend of Constantine as developed by the ninth century (or some time earlier) included episodes already known to historians by 600 and other which possibly originated in folklore, in an oral tradition. Whatever the roots of these stories, they are radically different from the panegyric of Eusebios. True, these tales are historically unreliable, but we are not concerned here so much with their historical trustworthiness. It is the shift in the literary approach which is remarkable.

First of all, the characteristics of the protagonist are changed: from a providential tool Constantine became a lively character capable of change, of suffering defeat, of being boastful. His actions are determined not directly by God's will but by the influence of other less important characters, such as Euphratas and Silvester. His political activity, which provides the focus of Eusebios' presentation, is pushed aside and various types of *divertissement* are introduced: the erotic adventure of his mother, a prostitute in a provincial inn; the discovery of his true parenthood, a typical motif of Middle Greek comedy; details of warfare; and miracles and prophetic dreams. While the *Barlaam and Ioasaph* is a Christian romance, the legend of Constantine is a secular romance, though with a strong Christian color. Unfortunately, it has come down to us in the form of "short lays", of separate episodes, and we do not know whether it ever had a unity. Even if we allow ourselves to assume that the legend of the medieval Greek "Constantine" overtook and replaced oral epic, we may only guess when this transformation took place—the reign, perhaps, of another Constantine, Constantine V Kaballinos, worshipper of the cross and champion against "barbarians", being a suitable period. This is no more than a guess, but there is one text that may be cited in support of such a hypothesis: the legend of Belisarios.

#### D. The legend of Belisarios

The existence of the legend of Belisarios in the Dark Century poses even more problems. The poem of Belisarios, in the form in which it is preserved for us,<sup>23</sup> is evidently a late

<sup>23</sup> Synoptic edition by W. F. BAKKER—A. F. VAN GEMERT, *Ιστορία τοῦ Βελισσαρίου*, Athens 1988; cf. M. PAPATHOMOPOULOS, *Τὸ στέμμα καὶ ἡ ἔκδοσις τοῦ Βελισσαρίου*, in N. PANAYOTAKES (ed.),

Byzantine work, most probably of the fourteenth century. The legend of Belisarios, a gifted general, and the victim of envy, was known to John Tzetzes in the twelfth century and probably existed before the tenth century, when certain of its elements were accepted both by chroniclers and the so-called *Patria of Constantinople*.<sup>24</sup> T. Lounghis moves the creation of the legend even further back, to the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century,<sup>25</sup> but provides no evidence to support this date. The content of the poem is as follows (we refer hereafter to the so-called version X in the edition of W. F. Bakker and A. F. van Gemert). Belisarios was a remarkable, intelligent and courageous general (v. 10) during the reign of the great *autokrator* Justinian. The poet calls him "the glory of the Romans" (v. 11), an expression applied to him already in tenth-century chronicles. Belisarios was one of the builders of Constantinople (v. 16). The nobles resented him as a man of humble origin (v. 29), and managed to persuade the emperor to put his general in jail. The military threat, however, prompted Justinian to free Belisarios and entrust him with the command of the army and fleet; after a brilliant victory, Belisarios returned to the capital. Again calumniated by the nobles, Belisarios was compelled to retire to the Pantocrator monastery. Once more the empire was threatened with an invasion, this time by the Persians, identified in the poem as Saracens (v. 122). This time the empire was saved not by Belisarios himself but by his (wholly legendary) son Alexios. The poem ends with the story of the blinding of Belisarios.

We do not know whether the legend of Belisarios existed in the eighth century, and, if so, which elements of the later saga it included. As Follieri correctly points out, the poem is devoted to the eternal problem "of the human heart" —the fall from favor and grandeur to humiliation and defeat, and accordingly it is difficult to discover the precise points at which the legend corresponds with reality. The story has some features in common with the Constantine-legend: like Constantine, Belisarios is a man of humble origin and like Constantine he is surrounded by the hatred and envy of the powerful; again, like Constantine both he and his son Alexios are successful generals, and Belisarios is involved in the construction of Constantinople. Certainly, these superficial resemblance do not prove that the legend of Belisarios originated at the same time or in the same milieu as the Constantine-legend, but the similarity is intriguing and worth consideration.

*Origini della letteratura neogreca*, Venice 1993, 349-357; G. SPADARO, *Graeca mediaevalia VII-IX, Syndesmos: Studies in onore di R. Anastasi*, Catania 1991, 163-178; *RSBN* 27, 1990, 195-210 and *Studi classici e cristiani offerti a F. Corsaro*, Catania 1994, 683-694.

<sup>24</sup> H. SCHREINER, Über die älteste Form der byzantinischen Belisarsage, *BZ* 21, 1912, 63f.; E. FOLLIERI, Il poema bizantino di Belisario, *La poesia epica e la sua formazione*, Rome 1970, 610f.; H.-G. BECK, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur*, Munich 1971, 151, also admits the possibility that the anonymous poet reflected the local tradition concerning the fate of the ninth-century general Symbatios.

<sup>25</sup> T. LOUNGHIS, *H ideologia της βυζαντινής ιστοριογραφίας*, Athens 1993, 28.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE DARK CENTURY (ca. 650-ca. 775)

How can we properly study the history of literature? Is not its meaning —its essence— ultimately unparaphrasable, ineffable? And might it not be the case that what meaning we do glean from it in accordance with *Rezeptionstheorie* is, in fact, only an individual reader's perception of a work? In other words, is it possible to move beyond a mere registering of extant literary products to an actual interpretation of their inner sense? Regardless of the theoretical answers to such questions (modern theorists are increasingly shifting their attention away from the work itself to the reader of the work), scholars of ancient and medieval literature persist in their endeavors to produce interpretative commentaries on their respective texts. While in practice we, too, attempt to interpret our texts in the light of their historical context, it is necessary to be aware of the traps that lie in the path of such an enterprise.

There are two main problems (aside from the theoretically assumed unbridgeable gap between the work perceived and the perceiving audience) to be addressed when attempting to investigate the history of the literature of the remote past: first, we have access to only a part of the literature of any given period and can never be sure whether what remains is a representative majority or a distorted and scanty sample of the total literary output; second, for lack of more appropriate yardsticks, we are usually doomed to apply, to the literary phenomena of the past the critical standards of our own time or of classical antiquity (such as the standards expounded in Aristotle's *Poetics*). Both shortcomings are particularly noticeable with regard to the century under consideration.

The preserved corpus is limited to a handful of writers of the second half of the seventh through the middle of the eighth century.<sup>1</sup> Is this because of a real diminution of literary creativity during this period or is it because of the hostility of those "wretched

<sup>1</sup> See the survey by P. CHRESTOU, *Ἑλληνική πατρολογία* 5, Thessalonike 1992, 303-338, 446f., 485-493, 497f., 556-558, 650-702.



monks" who allegedly destroyed the brilliant compositions of their Iconoclastic adversaries? As we tried to show in the introduction to this part of the book, the period in question witnessed not only a decline of literary activity, but also the collapse of other economic and cultural structures, at least within the urban milieu that was the center of cultural life in Late Antiquity. Even if we assume that a fair amount of literary work fell into oblivion (or has remained unpublished), no source furnishes the names of the great *literati* who allegedly were active in this century and whose *œuvre* did not survive for future generations due to a *damnatio memoriae*. The known authors of this period are few, but we have to be cautious: it does not mean that the era was entirely void of productivity. M. Mullett proposes the felicitous term "period of reduced literacy" to characterize this age,<sup>2</sup> while we shall try to demonstrate that this century nevertheless produced "new themes and styles".<sup>3</sup> We must, however, be very careful in our description of these themes and styles, lest we distort the specific pattern by imposing on it too many unnecessary diachronic observations and conclusions.

Another aspect of the problem is the lack of works of literary criticism produced during the Dark Century that might otherwise have helped us to assess the character and meaning of contemporary literary works. The twelfth-century exegetes of Damaskenos and Kosmas concentrated on minutiae and rare words, thereby side-stepping what is now regarded as literary criticism. We shall therefore explore some indirect ways to approach our goal; firstly, however, we have to classify the scanty literary legacy left behind by the writers of the Dark Century. And here we come face to face with the thorny problem of genre.

### A. Genre

Little has been written on the genres of Byzantine literature.<sup>4</sup> Two approaches are possible. In the first place, we may use a deductive method proceeding from theoretical definitions

<sup>2</sup> M. MULLETT, Writing in Early Mediaeval Byzantium, in R. McKITTERICK (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, Cambridge 1990, 161. The concept of the "great silence" has been often questioned; see, for instance, N. TOMADAKES, 'Η δὴθεν μεγάλη σιγή τῶν γραμμάτων ἐν Βυζαντίῳ (650-850), *EEBS* 38, 1971, 5-26: certainly, there was no absolute "silence".

<sup>3</sup> To use the formula suggested by Av. CAMERON, New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature: Seventh-Eighth Centuries, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I*, Princeton NJ 1992, 81-105. Unfortunately, Cameron combines the works of the first half of the seventh century with those of the following century, thus obscuring the picture of literary development in the Dark Century. P. SCHREINER's negative judgment of this article, *BZ*, Suppl. bibl. 1, 1994, 1, is not clearly articulated.

<sup>4</sup> M. MULLETT, The Madness of Genre, *DOP* 46, 1992, 233-243, suggests what she calls "generic analysis" of Byzantine literature ca. 550 and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. She does not examine the Dark Century.

(for instance, from Aristotelian categories of epic, lyric and drama) and thence attempt to make the extant works fit the preconceived categories that form an abstract network on which individual *opera* should find their places. It is apparent, however, that the Aristotelian categories, for example, do not create an appropriate framework for the works of Andrew of Crete or the patriarch Germanos; we cannot find epic or drama in the literature of the Dark Century (unless we interpret the conversations in the *Sermon on the Annunciation* by Germanos [see above, p. 62f.] as dramatic dialogues, though these were not intended for the stage), and very few compositions can be interpreted as lyric. Alternatively, an inductive method, can be applied, a pragmatic, empiricist conclusion from concrete observations to a workable generalization. Scholars have elaborated various generic categories for the classification of the literary legacy of Byzantium without defining the theoretical principles of such a classification. We shall use traditional terms (and categories), although the meaning of many terms, now in common use, may need clarification. We have to bear in mind that genres, whether inductively or deductively postulated, have been artificially constructed from miscellaneous elements, and in reality no individual work presents a perfect specimen of a genre.

It is easy to see that three genres (the "three H's") were dominant throughout this period: homiletics, hymnography and hagiography. A homily, or sermon, was originally a discourse (we are using the latter word in a conventional, not constructivist, sense) delivered to an assembly convened for eucharistic *synaxis* and devoted to the explanation of biblical texts, often to commentary upon the lections read during the liturgy. The meaning of the term was extended to the sermons delivered on the occasion of ecclesiastical feasts (heortological or festal homilies) and to panegyrics on saints. While all the extant homilies of Germanos are connected with New Testament themes (and primarily with the cult of the Virgin Mary), the sermons of Andrew of Crete present a more complicated pattern: twenty-one are devoted to biblical themes, ten are heortological, and twelve praise apostles, evangelists and saints (some themes can be seen to overlap).<sup>5</sup>

M. Cunningham has expressed the view that from the end of the seventh century the homily disappeared from the liturgy and was read either between the offices in the all-night vigils or during the *orthros*, before dawn or at daybreak.<sup>6</sup> Leaving this problem to liturgists, we may surmise that the homily as a literary genre underwent substantial changes

<sup>5</sup> The figures are based on CPG III. Andrew's homily *On the Images*, CPG 8193, is excluded as fake.

<sup>6</sup> M. B. CUNNINGHAM, Preaching and the Community, in R. MORRIS (ed.), *Church and People in Byzantium*, Birmingham 1990, 29-47. Less convincing is her important formulation, p. 38, that "homilies underwent important changes in their content, length and style between the sixth and eighth centuries." As for the length, we have to defer any conclusions until sufficient data has been collected and compared; the style, according to CUNNINGHAM, *ibid.*, 46, could vary "from the colloquial to the extremely high-brow"; and the general content, the heortological festivities, certainly remained the same. We tried above to demonstrate that the difference lay in approach rather than content. In another article, "Innovation or Mimesis in Byzantine Sermons?", in A.

during the Dark Century and, in Byzantium, reached the high point of its development in the works of Andrew and Germanos.

Above all it was hymnography that excelled in quality in the Dark Century. Not only did the most famous *literati* of this period (Andrew, Germanos, Damaskenos and Kosmas) write hymns, but they were all considered by the Byzantines (and by modern scholars) as great poets. C. A. Trypanis is correct to speak of "the supremacy of religious poetry" during the period.<sup>7</sup> Hymnography of the time was in a state of evolution: the new form of *kanon* was created, and we can observe various efforts to experiment with this form; further, it is quite possible that another new form, the *syntomon-sticheron*, first appeared in this period.

We have already touched upon the generic similarity of hymnography and homiletics.<sup>8</sup> Their function was identical: both genres were artistic prayers with a common didactic purpose —instruction of the faithful— and both were oriented primarily to festivities of the church calendar and publicly performed. It is true that hymns, in their external form, belonged to poetry and were sung, whereas homilies were in prose, but their prose was often rhythmic. Similarities of the two genres seem to be more substantial than their differences, and it cannot be coincidence that the term *ῥῆμα* was applied to works of both genres.

No less complex is the question of the relation between homiletics and hagiography. It is difficult to draw a line between a homily for a saint and a *Βίος καὶ πολιτεία*, the saint's *vita*, and it is characteristic of the complexity of the problem that A. Ehrhard not only accepts both homilies and *vitae* in his classic catalogue of hagiographical manuscripts, but even avoids any attempt to establish a distinction between the two.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the category "hagiography"<sup>10</sup> has been applied to works which have different generic characteristics: besides *vitae* and homiletic panegyrics (*enkomia*) of saints, the term is

LITTLEWOOD (ed.), *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music*, Oxford 1995, 67-80, M. B. CUNNINGHAM investigates the homilies of the Cappadocian fathers only. Since, in her formulation, "the originality of Byzantine sermons rests ultimately on their Christian content," there is evidently no special need, from her view-point, to study the development of the genre after the Cappadocians.

<sup>7</sup> C. A. TRYPANIS, *Greek Poetry from Homer to Seferis*, Chicago 1981, 427-448. Byzantine hymnography has been studied primarily in connection with the history of music (E. WELLESZ, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 2nd ed. Oxford 1961) or liturgy. The monograph by K. MITSAKIS, *Βυζαντινὴ Ὑμνογραφία*, I, Thessalonike 1971, stops at the threshold of the Dark Century; the book by Th. XYDES, *Βυζαντινὴ Ὑμνογραφία*, Athens 1978, 52-127, presents individual portraits of the four great poets of the period.

<sup>8</sup> R. STICHEL, *Homiletik, Hymnographie und Hagiographie im frühchristlichen Palästina*, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 389-406, comes to a similar conclusion on the basis of earlier texts. Cf. W. HÖRANDNER, *Éléments de rhétorique dans les siècles obscurs*, *Orpheus* 7, 1986, 303.

<sup>9</sup> EHRHARD, *Überlieferung*. The same approach is characteristic of BHG.

<sup>10</sup> There are several general works on hagiography, e.g. Ch. AIGRAIN, *L'hagiographie, ses sources, ses méthodes, son histoire*, Paris 1953; R. GRÉGOIRE, *Manuale di agiologia*, Fabriano 1987; R. DE GAFFIER, *Recueil d'hagiographie*, Brussels 1977 [SHag 61]; H. DELEHAYE († 1941), *L'ancienne hagiographie byzantine*, Brussels 1991 [SHag 73]; M. VAN UYTFANGHE, *Heiligenverehrung II*, RAC

applied to miracle stories, *translationes* of relics, *martyria* (historic and epic), short edifying tales "beneficial for the soul", entries in *synaxaria*; even Christian romance (e.g. *Barlaam and Ioasaph*) is often included in the category of hagiographical works. It is, however, evident that the *Miracles of St. Artemios*, Damaskenos' *Panegyric for St. Barbara* and *Barlaam and Ioasaph* are works of different literary genres, and it is only their Christian ethics that can be said to link them.

The term *ἁγιογραφία* was used by the Byzantines themselves, but not in the sense of modern "hagiography". John Damaskenos divides Holy Writ into several groups, the first Pentateuch (or Laws) encompassing five books from Genesis to Deuteronomy; then follows the second Pentateuch, "the so-called *grapheia*, that some call *hagiographa*" comprising the books of Joshua, Judges with Ruth, Kingdoms (regarded as consisting of two books) and Paraleipomena (*Chronicles*) (*Exp. fid.*, par. 90.59-63; Kotter, *Schriften* II, 211). Thus the term itself is conventional, while even more conventional is the perception of a unified category that is filled in fact with such varied sub-genres. But the term is well established, and for the sake of convention we shall continue using it for all kinds of laudation of saintly men and women, regardless of the works' generic characteristics.

In the first half of the ninth century, Theodore of Stoudios used the term *τὰ μαρτυρογραφία* to describe hagiographical discourses (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae*, ep. 386.61-63). The term also appears in a late (probably twelfth-century) commentary on Aristotle,<sup>11</sup> whose anonymous author draws attention to its use by his contemporaries. More questionable is the mention of this term in a letter by Theodore of Ikonion concerning the *Vita of Quiricus and Julitta* (AASS July IV, 21C). Not much is known about Theodore; in the letter he relates his conversation with a certain Marcian, a *kankellarios* of the emperor Justinian (I?), and on the basis of this account he has usually been located within the sixth century. Whether we can trust such a statement or not, the manuscript reading of the letter shows variations where in place of *μαρτυρογραφίον* (recorded by Ducange) we also find *μαρτύριον* (PG 120, 168A) and *μαρτυρολόγιον*.<sup>12</sup> It is impossible to prove whether the rare term *martyrographia* was Theodore's invention.

It has already been pointed out that the defenders of the cult of icons, active in the eighth century, found their hagiographers only in the period subsequent to this century.<sup>13</sup> It should be added also that the volume of hagiographical works produced in the Dark Century seems less in comparison with the prolific production of the previous period. And we have included in our survey of hagiographical works (see above, p. 22-27) several

14, 150-183, cf. ID., *L'hagiographie: un 'genre' chrétien ou antique tardif?*, *AB* 111, 1993, 135-188. In the latter article, VAN UYTFANGE studies the "hagiographical discourse" of the "pre-Byzantine" Greek and Latin literature. See a historiographical survey by I. ŠEVČENKO, *Observations on the Study of Byzantine Hagiography in the Last Half-Century*, Toronto 1995.

<sup>11</sup> *Anonymi et Stephani in artem rhetoricam commentaria*, ed. H. RABE, Berlin 1896, 159.8.

<sup>12</sup> G. VAN HOOFF, *Sanctorum Cyrici et Julittae acta graeca sincera*, *AB* 1, 1882, 201.13.

<sup>13</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 2f.

discourses (the *vitae* of Alypius, Eustolia, Matrona of Perge, Gregory of Agrigento) whose dating in the Dark Century is hypothetical. Thus the observed reduction in hagiographical production in those years may in fact have been even more marked than indicated in our account.

A characteristic feature of the literature of the Dark Century is the lack of the most social and the most private literary genres: historical and chronographical works, compositions in the theatrical genre, private letters and lyrics all failed to attain any significance. Rather, Byzantine literature of the period—as we know it today—encompasses primarily genres whose tendency was to remove the dividing line between Earth and Heaven and to create an illusion of direct relationship between the author (as a representative of the community rather than as an individual) and divine power during an special, festive occasion. The “three H genres”, as they have come down to us, exist, of course, in written form. A fascinating, though ultimately unanswerable question is whether specifically oral, popular genres existed in the empire.

The very important role played by “orality” in the West during the early Middle Ages is widely recognized.<sup>14</sup> The long neglected problem of oral literary forms in Byzantium has only recently begun to receive serious attention, but is usually limited to discussions of the epic of *Digenes* and the vernacular romances.<sup>15</sup> These relatively late texts abound in repetitive formulas typical of popular poetry;<sup>16</sup> nevertheless some Byzantinists do not accept the idea of oral transmission of vernacular works and are inclined to see in the repetitive formulas the product of “povertà creativa”.<sup>17</sup> The possible oral background of some early hagiographical discourses was suggested by R. Maisano.<sup>18</sup> Naturally, the oral genre did not leave palpable traces, and we can only attempt to reconstruct it hypothetically. It would not be unreasonable to assume that hymns and epic *martyria* with which we are familiar in written form had also a different, oral existence, being memorized

<sup>14</sup> The contrast of the oral and written in Western early medieval literature was underscored by B. STOCK, *The Implications of Literacy*, Princeton NJ 1983.

<sup>15</sup> See a convenient survey by R. BEATON, *Oralità e scrittura nel romanzo greco del tardo Medioevo, Medioevo romanzo e orientale*, Soveria Mannelli 1995, 1-9.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, E. and M. JEFFREYS, *The Oral Background of Byzantine Popular Poetry, Oral Tradition* 1, 1986, 504-547; R. BEATON, *Orality and the Reception of Late Byzantine Vernacular Literature, BMGS* 14, 1990, 174-184.

<sup>17</sup> G. SPADARO, *Oralità nella letteratura greca medievale in demotico?*, in N. PANAYOTAKIS (ed.), *Origini della letteratura neogreca*, Venice 1993, 285-305; G. SIPHAKES, *Τό πρόβλημα της προφορικότητας στη μεσαιωνική δημόσια γραμματεία*, *ibid.*, 267-281. More cautious is C. CUPANE, *Leggere e/o ascoltare, Medioevo romanzo e orientale*, 100; cf. EAD., *Δεύτε, προσκατεργήσατε μικρόν*, *Diptycha* 6, 1994-1995, 147-168.

<sup>18</sup> R. MAISANO, *Tradizione orale e sviluppo narrativo nel Prato di Giovanni Mosco, BollBadGr* 38, 1984, 3-17, also in M. MAZZA-C. GIUFFRIDA (eds.), *Le trasformazioni della cultura nella tarda antichità, Atti di Convegno tenuto a Catania. Università degli Studi, 27 sett.*, Rome 1985 [Storia 19], 663-667.

by the faithful: they also repeat formulas, refrains and situations which could be transmitted orally. We may suppose that the epic legend about the hero of Christianity, Constantine the Great, and the even more legendary saga of general Belisarios existed in oral form, but having assumed this we cannot establish the time of their origin. Yet if the popular Constantine-legend (as well as the Belisarios-legend) preceded its written versions, it differed dramatically, in its secular character, from the “three H genres”, predominant in the Dark Century.

## B. Themes

### 1. The war with the Arabs

The last years of the reign of Herakleios (610-41) were darkened by the long-drawn out war with the Caliphate. By the second half of the seventh century the empire had lost Syria and Palestine, Egypt and North Africa; in 674-78 and again in 717/8 Constantinople herself was besieged by the Arab fleet. Although Leo III (717-41) managed to repel the invasion, a period of imbalance was to ensue.

The Arab menace was a question of life and death for Byzantium, and was aggravated by the religious conflict between the two states: the religion of the Caliphate, Islam, was hostile toward Christianity, and conversion to Islam was a key item of Arab propaganda. The conflict thus existed on both a political and ideological level.

The religious irreconcilability of the two cultures was clearly understood by the Greek thinkers of the Dark Century, especially those who were to fall under Arab political power. It was probably John Damaskenos himself who wrote the *Dispute of a Saracen and a Christian* (Kotter, *Schriften* IV, 419-38), while later, at the turn of the century, another monk of Mar-Saba, Theodore Abu-Qurra (d. 820/25), continued the polemic against Islam.<sup>19</sup> Anastasios Sinaïtes, as we have seen, was concerned with the situation of Christians in the Muslim lands. And Anastasios the Monk (we pass over, here, the issue of whether he is in fact one and the same person with Sinaïtes) spoke several times about the Arabs who “barbarized” all of Palestine and caused the shortage of olive oil in Sinai (F. Nau, *Le texte grec des récits du moine Anastase sur les saints pères du Sinaï, OrChr* 2,

<sup>19</sup> I. DICK, *Un continuateur arabe de Jean Damascène: Théodore Abuqurra, évêque melkite de Harran, Proche-Orient Chrétien* 12, 1962, 209-223, 319-332 and 13, 1963, 114-129; S. GRIFFITH, *Faith and Reason in Christian Kalam: Theodore Abu-Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion*, in S. Kh. SAMIR-J. S. NIELSEN (eds.), *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750-1258)*, Leiden 1994, 1-43.

1902, 65.23-24), about "the savage barbarians" who attacked and murdered the Christians living in the mountains (p. 80.19-20), and about the Saracens who mocked Sinai and the "honorable crosses" that had been placed there (p. 82.18-20).

It is remarkable that the Byzantine literature of this period essentially ignores the theme of the Arab war. We have seen that a homily attributed to Germanos and describing the deliverance of Constantinople from siege by the Arabs was actually a product of the next century; Theodosios the Grammarian praised a victory over the Arabs in an iambic poem, but its attribution to the Dark Century is not certain, and also uncertain is whether the anonymous *Martyrion of the Sixty*, praising Leo III for a victory over the Arabs, is indeed the work of a contemporary of the emperor. Further, the *Miracles of St. Therapon* and the *Enkomion* for the saint both mention the attack of the sons of Hagar on Cyprus (Deubner, 123E.22-23, 124, par. 7.11-12); and as we have seen, Andrew wrote of the Arab menace to Crete. In his *Megas Kanon* Andrew spoke in vague terms of a victory over the enemy (at Constantinople), and it is not impossible that the *Akathistos Hymn* (if its attribution to Germanos is correct) alluded to the defeat of the Arabs outside the walls of Constantinople. No evidence exists, however, of a large-scale historical account of the battle at Akroinon or of the salvation of Constantinople.

This silence of the texts becomes especially notable when compared with the attention given to the "Persian theme" in the literature of the preceding period: the Persian wars were described by Prokopios and his continuators; George of Pisidia devoted panegyrics to Herakleios' victories over the Persians; an anonymous *literatus* created a romance-like *Conversation at the Sasanian Court*; and the fate of Christian martyrs in Persia produced a stream of hagiographical discourses (*vitae* of Shirin, Golindouch, Maroutha of Martyropolis, Anastasios the Persian, *martyria*).<sup>20</sup> There are no accounts of martyrdoms at the hands of the Muslims in the texts of the Dark Century, save for the story of the Sixty, the date of which is uncertain. One might assume that the topic of the Arab conflict was later suppressed because the victorious emperor, Leo III, was an Iconoclast, but the siege of Constantinople in 674-78 took place during the reign of the Orthodox Constantine IV (668-85), and in any case the victory was not described by eyewitnesses. Be this as it may, the "Arab theme" was passed over by contemporary Greek *literati*, at least with regard to broaching the subject in any direct or overt manner, although it was commonly treated in a metaphorical way.

Let us begin with the most hypothetical cases. We suggest that the theme of *Barlaam and Ioasaph* —the conversion of the Oriental ("Indian" or "Ethiopian") prince—, expressed the expectation of the (Syrian?) Greeks that their infidel ruler would eventually see reason and accept the true creed, a theme, as we shall see, that was to be developed more fully later. We also suggest that the epic of Constantine the Great, with its emphasis

<sup>20</sup> H. DELEHAYE, *Les versions grecques des actes des martyrs persans*, Paris 1905: *PatrOr* II, 4; cf. E. FOLLIERI, *Santi persani nell'innografia bizantina*, *Atti del Convegno sul tema 'La Persia e il mondo greco-romano'*, Rome 1966, 227-242.

on military success achieved with the help of the Cross, was (subconsciously or not) linked with the jubilation at the triumph over the Muslim adversary. Unfortunately, neither of these works can be dated with certainty.

The Arab theme, however, was the focal point of the pseudo-historical *Apocalypsis* ascribed to Methodios of Patara (see above, p. 21f.), but reality is obscured there by fantastical images and the deliberate overlapping of chronological layers —past, contemporary and future.

Kosmas the Melode unquestionably belongs to the eighth century, while the Cross as the instrument of victory (over the Amalekite) is a very characteristic topic of this author. In an earlier chapter we contrasted Kosmas with Damaskenos who, as we surmised, avoided a military connotation of the Cross. We can support the idea of Kosmas' uniqueness on this point by comparing him to another eighth century hymnographer, Kyprianos. S. Eustratiades published twenty-three *heirmoi* of Kyprianos;<sup>21</sup> following hymnographic compositional rules, the *heirmoi* of the first stanzas treat the topic of the Crossing of the Red Sea and the defeat of the army of the pharaoh. Only twice (in nos. 64 and 301, in one of which Kyprianos' name is restored by the editor) does Kyprianos say in passing that Moses made the sign of the cross (σταυροτύπος); the cross appears elsewhere in some other kanons, for instance in that *On the Exaltation of the Cross* (no. 155), but not in a military context.

To conclude, it is possible to see the theme of the Arab war as having been removed to coincidental allusions or treated as a legendary event.

## 2. The Emperor

Imperial panegyric was a standard genre of the Late Roman empire, in both the Latin and Greek language: the last prose panegyric in Latin is that of Pacatus on Theodosios I, and it is followed by verse panegyrics by Claudian and Sidonius Apollinaris.<sup>22</sup> Greek theorists of rhetoric elaborated a special type of oration, the princely mirror, and in the first half of the seventh century George of Pisidia produced laudations in praise of the emperor Herakleios' military successes. Not a single panegyric of an emperor (including those victorious over the Arabs) survived from the Dark Century, and imperial themes are rarely encountered in homiletics. We have seen that the image of the emperor haunted the imagination of Damaskenos, but this image is neutral rather than encomiastic. Time and again emperors appear in hagiographical texts: we read in the *Vita of David of Thessalonike* about Justinian I, divine *basileus*, the most pious, Christ-loving (Rose, 9.12

<sup>21</sup> S. EUSTRATIADES, *Εἰρημολόγιον*, Chennevière-sur-Marne 1932.

<sup>22</sup> On Latin panegyrics see M. MAUSE, *Die Darstellung des Kaisers in der lateinischen Panegyrik*, Stuttgart 1994, and the literature indicated there.

and 31, 12.20), lord of the universe (p. 9.22, 10.11-12, 12.9), and at his side acts the *augusta* Theodora (p. 11.18-19); it was she who sent κουβικλοάριοι (sic!) for David and received him in her private room, while Justinian was away from the palace taking part in the ceremony of *prokensos* (p. 11.12-15).<sup>23</sup> An unnamed *basileus* (most probably Constantine IV) in the *Miracles of St. Demetrios* is dubbed "crowned by God" (Lemerle I, 209.4, cf. 210.17); the hagiographer says in passing that he warred against the Hagarenes (p. 209.17), but his role in the defence of Thessalonike is insignificant: for instance, he sends to the city ships loaded with grain (p. 221.4). Leontios, the biographer of Gregory of Agrigento, praised Justinian, the emperor of Constantinople, for his support of the saint in the conflict with the Roman Church, but the image of the *basileus* is shadowy. The only emperor raised to the status of legendary hero is Constantine the Great in the hypothesized, possibly eighth-century, oral epic.

### 3. Iconoclasm

If we believe ninth-century chroniclers and hagiographers, the conflict over the veneration of icons was the focal point of the political life of Byzantium between 730 and 775. During the Dark Century the theology of the icon was discussed by Germanos and John Damaskenos. B. M. Melioranskij, in publishing a treatise titled *Admonition* (Νουθεσία) of the Old Man concerning the Holy Icons, added to the list of Iconodule theologians of the mid-eighth century a certain George of Cyprus. The author calls himself θεοσεβής (the God-fearing), probably a pseudonym, while "George" is the name of the main hero of the treatise, whose activity, teaching and dispute with an Iconoclastic bishop, Kosmas, are described in the *Admonition*.<sup>24</sup>

Melioranskij dated the *Admonition* (at least, its two last sections: George's dispute with Kosmas and the presentation of his own doctrine) between 750 and 754, on the basis of an *argumentum ex silentio*, the omission of the Iconoclastic Council of Hieria of 754. The argument, however, must surely be wrong, since "theosebes" speaks twice (pp. XXVII.30-31 and XXVIII.24-25) about the assembly in the Palace where the emperor ordered the Church fathers to be read. But this assembly in the Palace is most probably the Council of Hieria. Then Melioranskij identified the author of the treatise as George of Cyprus, who was condemned at the Council of Hieria alongside the patriarch Germanos and Damaskenos. There is no link between the two Georges except their name: the George of the *Admonition* was active in Cilicia and had no connection with Cyprus. Dating the

<sup>23</sup> Emendation by A. VASILIEV, *Life of David of Thessalonica*, *Traditio* 4, 1946, 123 n. 20.

<sup>24</sup> B. M. MELIORANSKIJ, *Georgij Kiprijanin i Ioann Ierusalimjanin, dva maloizvestnyh borca za pravoslavie v VIII veke*, St. Petersburg 1901. On this treatise see S. GERO, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V*, Louvain 1977 [*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 384, Subsidia 52], 25-36; BECK, *Kirche*, 487.

dispute between George and Kosmas to the time after 754 makes the identification even less plausible. Thus the *Admonition* may indeed have been written within the chronological framework of the Dark Century, but could equally belong to the subsequent period.

Whatever the date of the *Admonition*, the Iconodule theoreticians of the first half of the eighth century were undoubtedly concerned about icons. Of course, the works of Iconoclasts were later destroyed, but we do possess fragments of Constantine V's writings against the cult of images. Yet it is remarkable how infrequently the theme of the icon appears in the "literature" of the period. And it is, however, important to bear in mind that icons occupy sometimes a significant place in hagiographical texts of the late seventh century. The anonymous author of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* venerated icons, and the cult of icons appears in the *Vita of Alypios*, where both the Cross and the image of the Lord are used to destroy the pagan idol (Delehay, p. 177.1-2). The hagiographer of St. Eustolia mentions the veneration of "the votive icons" in the shrine of Blachernae, but the date of this *vita* can be assigned only to a date sometime "after 600". There is no cult of icons in the works of the hymnographers Andrew or Kosmas; and there are no icons in the *Ecclesiastical History* attributed to Germanos or in the prophetic discourse of ps.-Methodios or in the *vitae* written in the first half of the eighth century. An interesting case is presented by the *Vita of Therapon* whose hagiographer (Andrew?) relates that the saint led a monastic life from childhood (Deubner, 121E.8); in the later entry in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 710.8-9) we find a characteristic addition: "[Therapon's] icons demonstrate that he had chosen monastic life;" however, there were no icons in the original *vita*. Moreover, the hagiography of this time does not present us with a single *vita* of a martyr executed for his veneration of images. We shall see that the theme of the icon assumes an important place in hymnography only from 787 onward, when the heroization of the saintly Iconodules became the central topic of hagiography.

### 4. The Virgin Mary, Mother of God

We have observed already that praise of the Virgin was a predominant theme in the homiletics of Andrew and Germanos. The same subject occupies a central place in the *œuvre* of another homilist of this period, Kosmas Vestitor, whose *Sermons on the Dormition* survived in Latin translation only. The *Legend of Theophilos of Adana* attributes to the Virgin (Radermacher, 204.14-16), dubbed also "creator of the world", κοσμοποιήτης (p. 206.8), as well as to the power of the Cross and baptism, the salvation of Theophilos who had sold his soul to the Devil. In the few extant fragments of the *Chronicle* of Hippolytos of Thebes, the Virgin Mary appears frequently;<sup>25</sup> the chronicler calculates

<sup>25</sup> F. DIEKAMP, *Hippolytos von Theben*, Münster i.W. 1898, ch. I.3; see JUGIE, *Mort et Assomption*, 224-226. Naturally we leave aside the authors of the first half of the seventh century who

how many years she lived (V, 3.3), explains why she was called the mother of Jacob and Jose<sup>26</sup>, the sons of the carpenter Joseph from his first marriage (IV, 7.2-6), and why John the Theologian, Christ's favorite disciple, was the "son" of holy Mary (IV, 3.11). Another indication of the exceptional role of the Virgin in eighth-century writings is the dedication to her of the ninth stanza of the *kanon*, the newly developed form of liturgical chant. It is hard, however, to marshal conclusive evidence since the cult of the Virgin never ceased to exist in Byzantium and it is very difficult to "quantify" the intensity of her veneration in this or any other century. Nevertheless, it may well be the case that the seventh and eighth centuries witnessed an intensification of the worship of the Mother of God. It is, for example, noteworthy that the epithet "slave of the Theotokos", very common on lead seals of the sixth through the mid-eighth centuries, thereafter disappears; the invocation of the Virgin continued in use, but from the late ninth century onward the invocation of the Lord gained in popularity.<sup>27</sup>

In the ninth century the Virgin Mary acquired a specific role as defender of the empire, primarily of its capital. This function of the Theotokos is praised already in two of the greatest works of an earlier time: Andrew's *Megas Kanon* and the *Akathistos Hymn* (by Germanos?). But in the Dark Century the main military symbol of victory is the Cross, while the Virgin is perceived as fulfilling, firstly, a transcendent role in the economy of salvation: on the one hand, through her Christ obtains His human nature, while the Father endows Him with the divine substance; on the other hand, by giving birth without losing her virginity, and by ascending to heaven after the Dormition, Mary breaks the earthly laws of nature and opens the way for the future divinization of mankind. Did the position of the Iconoclasts differ from the Orthodox view of the Virgin? The opponents of the emperor Constantine V accused him of irreverence toward the Virgin.<sup>28</sup> Theophanes (p. 415.24-29) quoted the Iconoclastic patriarch Anastasios (730-54) as having announced that Constantine denied to Mary the honor of having given birth to the Son of God: the emperor allegedly stated that she bore a mere man. Theosteriktos, the hagiographer of Niketas of Medikion (d. 824), affirmed that Constantine V had no respect for the Virgin and had compared her to a purse that loses its value after the gold coins are removed (AASS Apr. I, XXIV, par. 28). George the Monk repeated this anecdote, adding that Constantine did not want to call Mary the Mother of God.<sup>29</sup> Certainly, these statements are

developed the theme of the Virgin, such as Modestos of Jerusalem (d. 634) or the legend of Galbrios and Kandidos produced ca. 620.

<sup>26</sup> Jose, Christ's half-brother (who seems to be less well-known than Jacob), is mentioned in *Matth.* 13.55 as Joseph and in *Mk.* 6.3 as Iosetos.

<sup>27</sup> W. SEIBT, *Die Darstellung der Theotokos auf byzantinischen Bleisiegeln, besonders im 11. Jahrhundert*, in N. OIKONOMIDES (ed.), *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 1, 1987, 40.

<sup>28</sup> GERO, *Iconoclasm of Constantine V*, 144-146; cf. G. DAGRON, *L'ombre d'un doute: l'hagiographie en question*, *DOP* 46, 1992, 65.

<sup>29</sup> *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, ed. C. DE BOOR 2, Leipzig 1904, repr. 1978, 750f.

contradictory; moreover, it is a hazardous enterprise to try and restore details of Iconoclastic theology on the basis of criticism by Iconodule writers, but they do allow us to hypothesize that the Iconoclasts disapproved of the growing cult of the Virgin, and tried to restrict it.

Even more problematic is the link between the worship of the Theotokos and the social status of women in the Dark Century. Without claiming to offer a solution to this problem we would suggest that not only the Virgin but the "regular" holy woman occupied a prominent place in the homiletic and hagiographical literature of the time. We have seen that the healer Artemios had a powerful companion, Febronia, who cared for sick women. Damaskenos praised the saintly martyr Barbara, and among the limited number of saints' lives of this period (if, that is, they do genuinely belong to this period) there are *vitae* of the women Eustolia and Matrona; the *Vita of St. Alypios* is crowded with female figures: the mother of the saint plays an important part in his life, his sister Mary is a pious ascetic, the empress sends Alypios a letter full of alluring promises, the pious Euboula, "great among ladies", supports the saint, various unnamed women are mentioned while only a few men appear among the minor characters of the *vita*, and, finally, Alypios himself venerates holy women, saint Bassa and, particularly, saint Euphemia. This high concentration of women may be the result of accident, but it is ample proof that the theme of women was not excluded from hagiographical discourse.

The anonymous author of the *Miracles of St. Demetrios*, in describing the male world of military action, nevertheless finds there a place for women's activity. When the notables of Thessalonike attempted to conceal the chief of the Slavs, Chatzon, in expectation of ill-gained profit, it was the women who showed manliness and courage: they fetched him from his refuge, dragged him along the streets of the city, and stoned him to death (Lemerle I, 179.13-16). In another episode, the author depicts the wife of an unnamed *hermeneutes* (interpreter) (p. 210.21) who helped her husband hide Perboundos, but was caught and sentenced to execution by sword (p. 210.31-33).

### C. The author and his audience

While many ancient writers overtly professed their individuality and literary aptitude, the principle proclaimed by John Damaskenos ("Nothing is mine") reflects the topos of modesty and self-effacement typical of early Byzantine literature. Damaskenos laments his lack of talent in the prologue to his *Vita of Chrysostom* and begins his *Enkomion for Barbara* by stating that his own rhetorical skill is as nothing compared to the glory of victorious martyrs; if the enormity of the task (τὸ τῆς ὑποθέσεως μέγεθος) would make the most experienced orators hesitate before embarking on it, how much more would he, an



illiterate man, of limited experience, who had not touched with his finger the art of composing discourses be overcome by misgivings (par. 1.1-10, Kotter, *Schriften* V, 256)?

Society, however, did not perceive the author as a clumsy compiler lacking skill and experience. All the greatest writers of the Dark Century (Andrew of Crete, Germanos, John Damaskenos, Kosmas, Anastasios of Sinai) were proclaimed saints, and their later biographers emphasized their literary gifts and the high quality of their poetry and prose. In the *Commentary on Nazianzenos* attributed to Kosmas of Jerusalem this ambivalent position of the writer is clearly stated: the writer is a modest man but at the same time an instrument of God who speaks with the writer's tongue. But, once again, the date of the *Commentary on Nazianzenos* is debatable, and we are left with a degree of doubt as to what the Dark Century actually said about literary activity?

It is remarkable (unless it is accidental) how deeply interested the Dark Century was in the greatest ecclesiastical orator of late antiquity, John Chrysostom. Although George of Alexandria compiled Chrysostom's biography in the first half of the seventh century, it was rewritten shortly afterwards by Theodore of Trimitihont. All the surviving manuscripts ascribe the authorship of an *Enkomion for John Chrysostom* to Damaskenos, and B. Kotter (*Schriften* V, 351) considers the attribution undoubtedly correct. Kosmas Vestitor devoted to Chrysostom a *vita* and five orations on the *translatio* of the saint's relics to Constantinople. George of Alexandria mentions that Chrysostom wrote *logoi* and was very popular as an orator;<sup>30</sup> but for him John is first and last a moral paragon, a champion of the Church and of righteousness, and a victim of wicked people, especially maleficent bishops. Theodore of Trimitihont pays more attention to Chrysostom's literary creativity: he characterizes (par. 41.8-14) Chrysostom as most notable and remarkable in his speeches (ἐν λόγοις) and perfect in his actions; John Damaskenos admires Chrysostom as a writer and especially as a philosopher. But it is Kosmas Vestitor who expands on the topic: in one of the *enkomia* he formulates the thesis of the "divine root" of Chrysostom's eloquence, relating that John produced numerous good *logoi* from a heart tutored by God, and possessed a tongue capable of expressing the words of the "wondrous scribe and the fast writing pen", that is, the Son and Logos himself.<sup>31</sup> Kosmas exclaims that Chrysostom's tongue derived such grace from his lips that he conveys to every living being rational comprehension (λογική κατάληψις); he was delightful in rhetorical speech, wise in communication, knowledgeable in teaching, and spoke fluently and beautifully (μὴ ἀπορῶν τάχους λέξεων, ἀλλὰ κάλλους); he wanted to be clear and helpful, and did not avoid philosophy, but his main purpose was fruitfulness, to be of benefit (p. 153.19-28). And again: God expanded John's language and armed it in such a way that every land and city could enjoy the richness of his instructive works (p. 154.28-31). Chrysostom spoke (or

<sup>30</sup> F. HALKIN, *Douze récits byzantins sur saint Jean Chrysostome*, Brussels 1977 [SHag 60], par. 15.2-6, 17.12-21.

<sup>31</sup> K. I. DYBOUNIOTES, Κοσμά Βεστίτωρος ἀνέκδοτον ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἰωάννην τὸν Χρυσόστομον, *EEBS* 16, 1940, 153.8-14.

wrote) in such a manner that everybody could understand him, both the slow-witted and those with a keen intelligence (p. 154.22-23).

Kosmas returns to this theme in his speeches on the *translatio*. He laments that Chrysostom's lips, from which gold had flowed while the saint was living, had become silent; there was, however, the consolation of the saint's legacy: fountains were brimming with his wise discourses, the "foundations" of his exquisite tongue were visible, ravines were sated with his tenets, and his books continued to become yet more numerous, being counted—he allows himself a clumsy pun—not by any specific measurement but by piling up in harmonious (συμμετρῶν) multitude.<sup>32</sup> Kosmas is amazed at the scale of Chrysostom's *œuvre*—it is said that the saint left 4,800 books, an ocean of wisdom encompassing the whole world (p. 66.19 and 22-23), and he stresses that the words of the saint confer golden riches on the listener (p. 66.28-29). Chrysostom's work is not only desirable (ἐπιθυμητόν) to everybody and copied every day but is like a seed planted in fertile hearts, like a bunch of grapes pressed by hand, like salt with the taste of the evangelic language, like the apostolic milk; one can build on Chrysostom's writing as on a rock (p. 67.6-12). The act of literary creativity is supernatural, mystical, a kind of conversation with God, and the writer, therefore, is a saintly person.

The transcendent role of the writer is stressed by the anonymous author of the *Miracles of St. Demetrios*, who considers his work a continuation of that by John [of Thessalonike] (Lemerle I, 169.13-14). In his view, John was fortified by God (p. 184.14), experienced divine visions (p. 186.33-34), and was able to foresee the future (p. 194.12-13, 17-18). Accordingly the *Miracles of Demetrios*, which are furnished by God (θεοπάροχα—the first recorded use of the word?),<sup>33</sup> surpass the skill of poets and historians (? συγγραφεῖς), and so the hagiographer should neglect [the technique of] the regular accounts (εὐθέτους ἐκθέσεις) of *logographoi* (rhetoricians?) and philosophers (p. 227.9-11).

The link between the writer and the saintly world is established in a different manner in Andrew's *Homily for St. Patapios*. Andrew was apprehensive about writing the eulogy of the saint, but Patapios appeared to him in a dream and commanded the terrified writer to take up his pen.

Thus writers, in the imagination of the Dark Century, acquired the divine, supernatural characteristics of a saintly person. But who were they in real life? We know little about the *literati* of this period, and in many cases we know only names; and many works are veiled by an impenetrable anonymity. We are compelled to draw conclusions

<sup>32</sup> K. I. DYBOUNIOTES, Κοσμά Βεστίτωρος ἀνέκδοτα ἐγκώμια εἰς τὴν ἀνακομιδὴν τοῦ λειψάνου τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσόστομου, *EEBS* 2, 1925, 66.4-9.

<sup>33</sup> It is used in the ninth century, in the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* and in some letters by Theodore of Stoudios.

from very meager information, and these conclusions are of necessity extremely tentative. Nonetheless we shall try to make some suggestions.

In the first place, the role of secular authors is insignificant. In fact, only Kosmas Vestitor belonged to this category.<sup>34</sup> Some writers were monks (Anastasios of Sinai, Damaskenos, Kosmas the Melode, John the Sabaite, Leontios), others high-ranking members of the clergy (Patriarch Germanos, Bishops Andrew of Crete, Theodore of Paphos, Theodore of Trimithont, probably John of "Euboea"). Secondly, their geographical background is provincial rather than Constantinopolitan. Kosmas Vestitor evidently lived in the capital, and praised the *translatio* of Chrysostom's relics to Constantinople which he several times refers to as "the imperial polis" (Dyobouniotes, *EEBS* 2, 1925, 56.10, 59.17, 66.32, 71.37) rising to a poetic complexio: "May the people of Constantinople waiting for him rejoice, may the crowds of Komana deprived of him lament" (p. 56.7-8).

The anonymous author of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* was most probably a citizen of Constantinople. The action of the *Vita of Eustolia* is concentrated within the capital; the milieu of the *Vita of Matrona* is more complex, with the heroine, born in Perge, traveling to Jerusalem and Berytus as well as Constantinople. We have, however, to remember that the dating of both stories is very vague. Germanos was a patriarch of Constantinople, and Andrew spent some time in the capital, but neither of these two figures can be described with certainty as a genuine Constantinopolitan: Andrew originated from Syria and was connected primarily with Crete, and Germanos was a metropolitan of Kyzikos before his election to the patriarchal throne. John Damaskenos, Kosmas the Melode, John the Sabaite, Anastasios Sinaites (and Anastasios the Monk), ps.-Methodios all belonged to the Syro-Palestinian milieu, and possibly the same can be said about John of "Euboea"; Theodore of Paphos and Theodore of Trimithont are linked to Cyprus, and the anonymous author of the *Miracles of St. Demetrios* speaks of Thessalonike as "our city". The *Roman Miracles of Anastasios the Persian* and Leontios' *Vita of Gregory of Agrigento* are of Italian provenance. Constantinople has not yet become the predominant center of Byzantine literary activity.

The audience is even more elusive than the author.<sup>35</sup> Who are these "brothers" (ἀδελφοί) or "beloved" (ἀγαπητοί) addressed by the author of the *Miracles of St. Demetrios* and many other texts? Were the *Miracles* meant to be read aloud, to a specific monastic audience? Or are these forms of address to the audience merely formulaic expressions? Answers to these questions are hard to supply: we may be fairly sure that the voluminous *Barlaam and Ioasaph* was intended not for oral delivery but for silent reading, whereas

<sup>34</sup> The exegete of the seventh century John Droungarios (BECK, *Kirche*, 470f.), a figure about whom very little is known, may have been a secular official.

<sup>35</sup> The question about the audience of the hagiographer was raised by I. ŠEVČENKO, *Storia letteraria* (in French), *La civiltà bizantina dal IV al IX secolo: Corsi di studi* I, Bari 1977, 109-115; he concludes that this audience was "large et variable", and refuses to consider hagiography "un genre populaire".

certain *vitae* (of shorter length) could be "performed" before the brethren or sisters of monastic communities.

Silent reading, apparently not the norm in Late Antiquity, became standard in the Middle Ages, East and West. The invention of the table and the codex that could be placed on the table and silently copied was the material expression of this change, and the demise of the theater was another aspect of the same process. Certainly, public reading did not wholly disappear (it still survives today!), and homilies and hymns were performed aloud, while the taste for euphony (alliteration, assonance and so on) testifies to the existence of such performances. While it is not possible to produce indisputable evidence to support our case, we believe that there was a significant layer of oral literature in Byzantium, both "primary" (folkloric legends) and "secondary" (where the consumer-reader-listener learned by heart long passages of prose, principally the gospels, and verse), passages which were able to pour mystically over from one text to another, in the form of formulas, refrains, episodes and images.

Leontios, the hagiographer of Gregory of Agrigento, was interested in education and reading and particularly in John Chrysostom. According to Leontios, Gregory was the second Chrysostom (ed. Berger, par. 27.18), and Leontios relates how Chrysostom's book was found in the monastery of Sergios and Bacchus in Constantinople (*ibid.*, par. 28.9-10; cf. par. 30.16, 58.3-4). Gregory was a passionate reader: the hagiographer describes him sitting in the chapel of St. Julian with a book (*ibid.*, par. 8.1-2). In addition to the *Passio of the Holy Maccabees* (*ibid.*, par. 6.18-19) he read many times the *Vita of St. Basil of Cappadocia*, a work that made such a strong impression on the young Gregory that he decided to visit the holy places the saint had passed through (*ibid.*, par. 3.26-32). He was a responsible reader: once while reading for an audience of deacons a book by [Gregory the] Theologian, he was asked to explain the tortuous sentences, but refused to do it, "being a sinner and a private person". Later, urged by a bishop, he started interpreting this text and was able to do it perfectly without even looking at the book (*ibid.*, par. 31.8-12; cf. par. 54.11).

We are in a better situation when it comes to hymnography and homiletics that formed an element of liturgical performance—verse and prose texts whose features were inextricably bound to their function. Firstly, they are festal, celebrating the memory of a saint or some other momentous event of the Church calendar; they are jubilant by nature, rejoicing at the victory of Good over Evil, the Supernatural over the Earthly, God over the Devil. Secondly, they presuppose the active participation of the audience in the celebration (as Germanos states in his *Ecclesiastical History*), they are invitations, so to speak, to celebrate the event, to rise above everyday routine, and join, albeit temporarily, the transcendent world of the divine and holy, to which the orator and poet belonged by definition. Further, homiletics and hymnography, among other qualities, are thoroughly didactic: their purpose is to edify the audience, to teach people to emulate the saintly heroes, to reject base passions and to clean the soul. Festivals and ceremonies were a

symbolic participation of the microcosm in the cosmos, the proclamation of divine truth and the defense of order against heretics and demons. The audience is not only the present crowd gathered to attend the sacred performance and to participate in the celebration: the “modest” (but holy) writer molds characters and situations not only for his contemporaries but also for future generations, *πρὸς ἀσφάλειαν τῶν μετέπειτα γενεῶν*, as the anonymous hagiographer of St. Demetrios puts it (Lemerle I, 169.14).

The author wrote for education, for edification, for the *katharsis* of his audience. But what distinguishes literature from indoctrination is its tendency to entertain the audience: characters, description, narration and wording were in the Dark Century, as in antiquity, the principal means of literary entertainment. The question is whether they were the same as in antiquity, or whether, superficially similar, they were in fact altered and modified to new tasks and tastes.

#### D. Characters and composition

There is an evident difference between the ancient and the “hagiographical” hero. Leaving aside possible variations, we could say, with J. Perkins, that the hagiographical hero was a true sufferer whereas the heroes of ancient romance were subjected only to temporary, and therefore illusory, suffering<sup>36</sup>. Yet the sufferings of the hagiographical hero were those of the material plane and therefore, in Christian logic, non-substantial; they are overshadowed by his or her final triumphal ascent to the celestial world, prefigured by the saint’s supernatural qualities and especially the power to work miracles and to endure hardship and ordeals.

Since the literature of the Dark Century was consistently didactic, the protagonists had in principle to be not the images (“reflections”) of real people but paradigmatic types who represented the fullest potential of human nature, both good and evil. The saintly hero of hymns and hagiographical texts was depersonified and granted a series of virtues (piety, abstinence, endurance, chastity, generosity) that were rewarded by a series of superhuman abilities, such as the power to work wonders, to heal the sick, to foresee the future, to tame the forces of nature. Depersonification of the hero is vividly manifested, as we have seen in the *Miracles of St. Artemios* (see above, p. 27-35), on those occasions when the saint is given different physical appearances in different visions. St. Demetrios is pictured in the same “protean” manner: he was seen as a youth in military costume (Lemerle I, 238.10), or

<sup>36</sup> J. PERKINS, Representation in Greek Saints’ Lives, in J. R. MORGAN–R. STONEMAN (eds.), *Greek Fiction*, London-New York 1994, 255-271. The article is based on late Roman hagiographical texts.

as a *kankellarios* (p. 186.18), i.e. a civil official, or in a white *chlamys* (p. 178.1), on foot (p. 216.9-10), or riding a horse (p. 195.6). In these times there appears to have been no established “iconography” of the saint. The hero is a sign, a symbol, rather than a “naturalistic” person.<sup>37</sup> However, what is remarkable from our “naturalistic” view-point is slight deviations from the standard, and the endowing of saints with qualities outside the usual range of hymnic virtues. Unexpectedly frequent in these texts is the stress on the youth and beauty of the hagiographical-homiletic hero. Ioasaph is described as handsome (*ὠραῖος*) and having a shapely (*εὐφρής*) body (*Barlaam*, par. 29), and the young Barbara was distinguished by her beauty (*κάλλους... ὠραιότης*) (ch. 7.5: Kotter, *Schriften* V, 261). At the beginning of his saintly career, Alypios was at the prime of his youth (*ἀκμάζων νεότητι*: Delehaye, 154.22), and the twenty-five-year old ascetic Matrona had a fresh and vigorous (*σφριγῶν*) body (AASS Nov. III, 791C). It is probably not coincidence that the image of the Three Young Hebrews (*παῖδες*) in the furnace occupied an important place in hymnography, primarily in the seventh and eighth strophes of the kanon.

Some protagonists deviate from the strict hagiographical standard. Under the narrative influence of the apocryphal texts Mary the Virgin, as pictured by Germanos, looks more human than paradigmatic. The young Constantine the Great, who boasted of his royal origin and fought wild beasts, who was inclined to sacrifice innocent infants, and was defeated by the barbarians and narrowly escaped captivity, scarcely resembles the usual hagiographical model; this peculiarity of Constantine’s image may well be due to the [hypothesized] oral origin of the *Constantine-legend*. The character of Theophilos of Adana also stands out. He was an *oikonomos* in Adana, whom the clergy and the landowners of the city wanted to elect bishop. However, he refused the offer; and when the new bishop deprived Theophilos of his office and commanded him to stay at home, the former *oikonomos* took umbrage and in despair sought the help of the Devil who promised assistance on condition that Theophilos renounce “Mary’s son” in a written contract (Radermacher, 190.10-12). The wretched man agreed, and soon the bishop restored Theophilos to his office and entrusted him with the administration of the church. A happy ending follows: Theophilos repented and was saved.

As a rule, the saint was predestined, even before birth, to an extraordinary destiny. Alypios’ pregnant mother had an auspicious dream of a lamb on whose horns two sets of candles (*κηρῶν δύο λαμπάδες*: Delehaye, 148.24) shone. At his birth, the entire town gathered to celebrate. He grew up nourishing “the workshop of his soul” with the milk of learning and divine knowledge; and in his youth he showed Christian piety and deportment. Such characteristics are found in the *vitae* of such dissimilar saints as Barbara and John Chrysostom, to name just two. More “entertaining”, however, are the tales of

<sup>37</sup> It is possible that a similar change—from lifelike quality to the deconcretization of the image—took place in the visual art of the period; cf. J. C. ANDERSON, The Byzantine Panel Portrait before and after Iconoclasm, *The Sacred Image East and West*, Urbana-Chicago 1995, 25-44.

those saints who, pagans or even sinners in their early careers, eventually underwent a radical transformation: Mary of Egypt and Ioasaph assumed their piety and sanctitude after moral struggle or an act of divine grace.

Like the vices and virtues in the *Sacra Parallela*, the protagonists are usually arranged in pairs: the hero and anti-hero, the bearer of the image of Good and the bearer of the image of Evil. The antithesis ("negation") of the pious Barbara is her pagan father Dioskoros; Matrona is contrasted with her coarse husband Dometianus; John Chrysostom with the relentless empress; Gregory of Agrigento with two slanderers, Sabinus and Crescentius (acting in unison as a single person); the good Roman emperor, in the *Apocalypse* of ps.-Methodios, with the Son of Perdition; and, in a sublimated form, God with the Devil. The hero can be opposed by a multitude, as Demetrios fighting the barbarians.

The pair of protagonists may be composed in a different way: instead of the contrasting hero and anti-hero we find a couple in communication (or the hero communicating with a group), such as Gabriel and Mary in various homilies on the Annunciation, or Christ and the apostles in sermons on the Transfiguration. The *Vita of David of Thessalonike* lowers the constellation to earth: here the pair is the saint and the emperor Justinian I (supported by Theodora) acting in unison. The relations of a saintly healer with sick people seeking his (or her) aid also belong to the "communicative" category. More complex is the composition of the *Barlaam-romance*: the author depicts a trio of protagonists, two of whom (Barlaam and Ioasaph) are in "communicative" relations, both being opposed to King Abenner, the symbol of paganism; the latter opposition, however, is shortlived, since Abenner, like Theophilos of Adana, undergoes gradual change and finally embraces Christianity. Comparatively rarely the protagonist is presented "in isolation", the hero of lyric poetry (Andrew's *Megas Kanon* and iambics) or the solitary saint, such as Mary of Egypt, but even in these cases the isolation is illusory and the hero's soliloquy is, in fact, a dialogue, mostly with a silent but compassionate God.

The construct of pairs of contrasting (good and evil) protagonists has a profound philosophical background: the cosmos is construed as divine, that is, essentially good, and the author and his audience, observing the harmony of the cosmos broken, blame this on the evil agent, which consciously revolts against God and His saints. In other words, human failures and misfortunes are caused by circumstances beyond the control of suffering men and women. However, it may be claimed that one of the major emotional forces in literature is contrition, atonement, repentance, the passionate perception of man's own sinfulness and the search for moral *katharsis*. And this is the main theme of the *Megas Kanon*.

Besides the protagonists, minor characters populate the tales. They do not usually have independent roles but act alongside the hero or the anti-hero. Thus in the legend of Theophilos of Adana, the intervention of the Devil is preceded by the appearance of a "Jew of the city" whom Theophilos meets, characteristically, at night "in the city hippodrome" (Radermacher, 188.8-10), a symbol of the world of the ancient city. The princess

Sopatira in the *Vita of Eustolia* is practically the heroine's double, and the *hegoumenos* Basianos in the *Vita of Matrona* appears only to shelter the heroine and to direct her to the next stage of her journey. More complex is the case of the *Miracles of St. Demetrios* in which single episodes involving minor personages acquire a relative independence. Thus Perboundos, king of the Rhynchinoi, is the focus of a novelette; he is given a physical characterization ("He wore Roman dress and spoke our language": Lemerle I, 209.29-30), and is himself provided with accessory *dramatis personae*, such as a *hermeneutes*, and a wife, who tried to hide him when he escaped from the imperial palace, and who were discovered and executed for state treason. In the *Constantine-legend* minor characters (the pope Silvester, the architect Euphratas, the soldier Eusignios) have their own personalities. Especially rich in minor characters is the *Romance of Barlaam and Ioasaph*, where they are much more than shadowy figures painted in black and white. Zardan, for instance, is the hero of a separate novelette: he was the king's official, appointed by Abenner to supervise his son's palace (par. 179). When Barlaam started frequenting the palace, Zardan grew suspicious, and the worried Ioasaph decided to mislead him: he placed Zardan behind a curtain to let him overhear his conversation with Barlaam, and tried to trick the courtier into believing that he, Ioasaph, did not share Christian views. Zardan, who guessed the truth, was torn between his love for the prince and his duty toward the king; in distress, he withdrew to his house, feigning sickness. Concerned for his servant's health, Abenner sent to him a great doctor, and Zardan, moved by the king's concern, was unable to keep the secret any longer: he went to the Abenner and made known to him Barlaam's visits and their purpose (par. 191f.). Numerous other minor characters appear in digressive episodes of the *Barlaam-romance*.

It is possible to view the composition of the discourse (or its plot) as the structure of relations between protagonists and between protagonists and minor characters, developed spatially and temporally. In lyric poetry the development of human relations is, naturally, replaced by the development of ideas. As we have seen, the writers of the Dark Century (at any rate, the best of them) endeavored to overcome a recurring compositional problem—monotony of presentation. Thus the structure of the *kanon* was based on established principles ascribing rigid initial themes to each stanza (Crossing the Red Sea, Jonah, the Three young Hebrews and so on). The monotonous structure of the plot was justified by a philosophical premise, namely, the monadism of truth. This concept was established before any movement took place in the discourse, and being the supreme truth it had to be repeated, illustrated and taught, not discovered in the stream of events. And the heroes, by their words and deeds, propagated the truth (for the benefit of their contemporaries and generations to come), they were, in a sense, "liberated" from the need to undergo painful search for the truth (so important in the modern novel). We have seen, however, that the greatest authors of the period (such as Andrew of Crete or the authors of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* and of the *Barlaam-romance*) found various ways to break the monotony of the narrative's development: the plot is divided into more or less clear-cut episodes or interrupted by novelettes. The same technique can be found in some other works of the

period. The story, for example, of Matrona's journey (see below) is interrupted by the episode of the discovery of the head of John the Baptist in the vicinity of Emesa (AASS Nov. III, 796D).

The time of the discourse was predominantly linear, and the events of the saints' lives were usually presented in a straightforward chronological sequence. To use the terminology of Russian formalists, we may say that the plot and the fable (*fabula*) usually coincide. This linear sequence of time, however, could be ignored in miracles, in which the saint, already enjoying eternal life, works his wonders in an arbitrary chronological order. More indicative is the divorce of the plot and fable in the first homily *On the Presentation* by Germanos: it begins with the Virgin's entrance into the temple, and thereafter, by a flashback, the writer returns to preceding events — Anna's barrenness and the miraculous birth of the protagonist Mary. The linear sequence is broken occasionally by moments of repetition when, for instance, a saint being asked to introduce himself repeats the elementary facts of his or her life that have in fact already been set out in introductory chapters (for instance, Matrona repeats a couple of times the story of her marital life: AASS Nov. III, 794C, 803CD). Further, the chronological sequence can be broken by the saint's premonitions or by recollection of the past, but these cases are rare — as we said, the normal development of the plot is chronologically linear, even in such a voluminous text as *Barlaam and Ioasaph*.

The geographical space referred to in the discourse is usually vast. The *Apocalypse* of ps.-Methodios, for example, encompasses the whole *oikoumene*, in which the great mystical drama of history is evolving. But even a regular *vita* covers extensive areas of the world, retaining as it does the ancient infatuation with travel, the major compositional feature not only of the love romances but of the stories of the apostles as well. Gregory of Agrigento, at the age of 18, embarked on a journey to Carthage, Tripolis, Jerusalem and thence back to Sicily, and like the protagonists of ancient love romances he experienced high adventure; thus he barely escaped being sold into slavery by a *naukleros* from Carthage. The *Vita of Matrona* is compositionally the opposite of the love romance: Matrona runs not to but from marriage; she begins her journey after marrying Dometianus and giving birth to a daughter called Theodote; she looks not for physical rapture but for asceticism and celestial love. But on the surface, her journey, her hide-and-seek game with Dometianus, is tantamount to the wanderings of lovers in an ancient romance. To begin with, the *vita* contains the theme of transvestitism — Matrona, disguised as a eunuch, entered a male monastery, where one of the brethren noticed that the lobes of her ears were pierced for earrings (AASS Nov. III, 793A). This frivolous observation, more fitting for a love romance than a hagiographical text, is followed by a serious discussion of monastic discipline: the abbot asks Matrona, how she, a woman, dared to approach the holy eucharist with her head uncovered, and she describes to him how she pretended to suffer from headache and drew her cape over the ears lest she be revealed and at the same time lest she trespass the prohibition imposed on women (col. 794B). From the monastery (in Constantinople) she fled by ship to Emesa. She was pursued by Dometianus but managed to flee Emesa for

Jerusalem. Dometianus followed her there too, and came upon her by chance in the church of the Anastasis but failed to recognize his wife (col. 797DE), and so on and so forth.

The case of Matrona is relatively clear, and its connection with the love romance plain to see;<sup>38</sup> more obscure are these links in the *Vita of Alypios*, a Paphlagonian saint. Alypios' sanctity was presaged by marvellous visions and signs, and soon after birth he was placed under the supervision of the local bishop. His ecclesiastical career was promising: the young man became deacon and *oikonomos*, and was highly esteemed for his piety and behavior. But he was restless and he told his mother about his desire to go to the Orient (*Anatole*, whatever that may be taken to mean). The scene is vividly depicted: Alypios' wish is expressed actorially, in a direct address to his mother; she did not try to dissuade him, did not show any female weakness at the news of his imminent departure; rather, they embraced one another affectionately (Delehaye, 151.32-34). The theme of the journey is introduced and prepared but then nipped in the bud: the city's bishop prevented Alypios from going far to the East; the future stylite saint was allowed only to visit the festival of St. Theodore the Martyr in Euchaita (p. 152.11-12), whence he returned home and devoted himself to monastic life. The author concludes with a polyptoton: "A son of his fatherland (*πατρίδος*), he cared about the salvation of the fatherland (*πατρίδι*)" (p. 152.16-17). Travel in geographical space is supplanted, in the *vita*, by Alypios' ascent of the ladder of virtues: the saint first settled down in a deserted area in the mountains south of the town, then headed to Chalcedon, but was commanded to turn back, confined himself to a narrow cell, then to the top of a pillar where he endured inclement weather "like a bronze statue" (p. 158.6-10) — an image that would appear to defy classical esthetics according to which the statue was to imitate man, not man a statue. There was, so it seems, little hope of further progress, but Alypios found a way to advance: "the warrior of God" asked his mother to give him an adze, with which he destroyed, despite her protests, the skimpy awning that provided him with rudimentary shelter, and threw down the remnants (p. 159.23-25). He then spent 53 years "in the fresh air".

There are two major compositional elements: narrative and descriptive. Theoretically well-defined, the distinction between the two is often obscured in practice. When Damaskenos describes the ordeal of St. Barbara, is it a description or a narration? Hagiographical-homiletic descriptions are rarely *ekphraseis* of landscapes or buildings; they are mostly either characterizations of protagonists, usually in the form of a list of virtues, or representations of illnesses and other tribulations. Guided by a desire to express

<sup>38</sup> Q. CATAUDELLA, *Vita di santi e romanzo*, *Letterature comparate. Studi in onore di E. Paratore* 2, Bologna 1981, 931-952, establishes, on the basis of Greek hagiographical texts (including the *vita* of Gregory of Agrigento), various motifs common in saints' *vitae* and ancient romance: travel, magic, dreams, judiciary action. As H.-G. BECK, *Byzantisches Erotikon*, Munich 1984, 75-82, argued, the erotic motif held a substantial place in late Roman hagiographical discourses. On its development in later texts see ID., *Marginalia on the Byzantine Novel*, in B. REARDON (ed.), *Erotica Antiqua*, Bangor 1977, 59-65.



supreme truth, the description as a rule avoids naturalistic details and presents inner qualities, invisible to the physical eye. Consider, for example, this description of the relics of St. Therapon (Deubner, 123, par. 5.5-9): "The purification of our souls, the hoard of holy favors, the largess of cures, the recovery of the fallen, help for old age, education for the youth, the protection of virginity, the order of asceticism, the perfection of priests, the invincible defence of the needy." The reader is not given to visualize the relics but is made to understand their benefits for mankind.

In the *Miracles of St. Demetrios* descriptions are frequent. The siege of Thessalonike by "the entire folk of the Sklabenoi" is described in detail: the attackers covered their ships with planks and hides to protect the crews from the shooting from the walls of the besieged city; the inhabitants erected wooden pillars to which they attached the iron chain barring the harbor entrance, and they dug a moat near the church of the Theotokos. All these preparations for the battle ("naturalistically" depicted) took three days; at dawn on the fourth day the action begins. In other words, the author moves from the description to the narrative. While the static description is oriented to sober factuality, the kinetic narration is organized around the supernatural, the miracle: Demetrios, in a white *chlamys*, made his appearance on the walls, then walked on the sea as on the earth (even the Jews were able to see this miracle, adds the hagiographer, afraid that the reader will not trust the testimony of "those who received the holy baptism") (Lemerle I, 178.1-5); the saint threw the Slavs' boats into disorder and made the attackers retreat. Another static description, the lamentable condition of the church of St. Demetrios after damage by fire, is followed by another kinetic narration, the miraculous restoration of the shrine due to the intervention of the saint (p. 197.11-17). In other words, the descriptions are static and "naturalistic", while the narratives are kinetic and deal with wondrous actions.

A major compositional feature (for modern readers, a problem, perhaps) of the time was a tendency to overemphasize the unity of actions and events. The sequence of events was linear; its causality was not embedded in the plot (that would run the risk of developing from possibility to probability and from probability to necessity) but existed outside the plot, in ideological monadism. The reader knew, at the beginning of the story, that Ioasaph would embrace Christianity, that St. Demetrios would conquer the barbarians, and that the ordinary Palestinian girl Mary would become the Mother of the Savior. In principle, there was no place for choice in the development of the plot, and this led, on the one hand, to monotony of presentation, and, on the other, to rejection of the concept of verisimilitude: since the cause was omnipotent and supernatural, the reader did not feel the need for realism. Events need not, indeed should not look natural; on the contrary, the miraculous<sup>39</sup> and the improbable were normal elements of the discourse. The

<sup>39</sup> On the increasingly significant role of the miracle after the victory of the Iconodules, see M.-F. AUZÉPY, L'évolution de l'attitude face au miracle à Byzance (VIIe-IXe siècle), *Miracles, prodiges et merveilles au Moyen Age*, Paris 1995, 44f.

"naturalistic" details were introduced not as the means of causation but simply to balance the hyperbole of the narrative.

Sex and food are probably the main naturalistic elements of any literature, and the writers of the Dark Century took a determined stand toward both. In principle, sex and food were deprived of their pleurability, contrasted with temperance and chastity and removed to the sphere of restricted necessity, even of sin. Nevertheless, they keep alluring the writer and reader alike, and the prostitute emerged time and again in the most pious situations—not only to tempt Ioasaph, but to give birth to a mighty saint or to show the power of God's dispensation. The sexual theme is particularly intense in the *Commentary on Gregory of Nazianzus* attributed to Kosmas of Jerusalem, but there are grounds for suspecting that this text is of a later period than the Dark Century.

We have tried to outline a number of general principles that can be seen to emerge from the Byzantine literary *œuvre* of the Dark Century and that appear to differ from what was typical of antiquity. At the same time it is necessary to underline that these principles were brought into play with varying degrees of success in works of different *literati*: we attempted to demonstrate the distinction between Germanos and Andrew, between John of Damascus and Kosmas the Melode. Though not absolute these general lines of approach were substantial, and the best works show distinct individuality under the surface of "the Byzantine standard".

### E. Wording

It seems not unreasonable to accept, with H. Maguire<sup>40</sup>, that Byzantine art used two different narrative modes: a "paradigmatic" mode in which images were "drained" of their specificity, and a "participatory" mode which applied illustrative and naturalistic details, borrowed from appropriate literary models. These details, according to Maguire, were intended to engage the emotions of the viewer. In Byzantine literature of the Dark Century the paradigmatic trend evidently outweighed the naturalistic, and the participatory function was fulfilled by wording rather than graphic presentation of images.

The composition of the discourse and its characters are ideas born in the head of the author (unless slavishly copied from his predecessors), and they need to be materialized in words. The wording, or mode of expressing ideas, comprises what scholars sometimes call "style". The concept of Byzantine style has been rarely studied, the best presentation of the problem being that of I. Ševčenko, and here we shall draw extensively on his definition.

<sup>40</sup> H. MAGUIRE, Two Modes of Narration in Byzantine Art, *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-historical Studies in Honor of K. Weitzmann*, Princeton 1995, 385-391.



Following Dionysios of Halicarnassus, Ševčenko distinguishes three levels of style and says that for a student of Byzantium: "a work in high style is one that uses periodic structure; its vocabulary is recondite, puristic and contains *hapax legomena* made up on a classicistic template; its verbal forms, especially its pluperfects, are for the most part Attic; its Scriptural quotations are rare or indirect, and its classical ones plentiful. In a work of middle style, periods are rarely attempted and fill-words and clichés more abundant; it requires the use of a patristic lexicon; and its Scriptural quotations are more frequent than its classical ones. A work in low style uses largely paratactic structures; its vocabulary contains a fair number of words unattested in standard dictionaries or coming from languages other than Greek; its verbal forms are not Attic; its Scriptural quotations, more frequently than not, come from the New Testament and Psalter."<sup>41</sup>

The principles governing the distinctions suggested in this paragraph are primarily grammatical, and will possibly allow the definition of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* as a work of a low level of style, and the sermons by Andrew as that of a middle level. The application of these principles, however, fails to make clear the link between the ideas expressed and the mode of expression. Moreover, the tripartite categorization of levels of style elaborated, as Ševčenko demonstrates, in antiquity (by Dionysios of Halicarnassus) remains valid diachronically and reflects neither the "style of the epoch" (if such a thing has ever existed) nor individual styles. We have tried to show empirically, for instance, the stylistic difference between Germanos and Andrew (reflected in the characterization of protagonists and in compositional structure). If estimated only "grammatically" this difference is missed.

Byzantine theorists of the Dark Century provide little help in our search for a definition of Byzantine style. Not a single handbook of rhetoric from the Dark Century has come down to us, and we do not know whether such a work was ever produced in that time. Historically the closest theoretical work on rhetoric is the *Commentary on Aphthonios' Progymnasmata* by John of Sardis<sup>42</sup> (first half of the ninth century); the tract is based on ancient tradition (many ancient writers and theorists are named in the book but not a single Byzantine author) and deals with genres (such as *enkomion*), not with the mode of expression. Not until Photios do we encounter the first Byzantine theory of style.

Approaching the problem empirically, we may state that the typical judgement applied at the time (inherited from patristics) views a "plain" style as a more appropriate

<sup>41</sup> I. ŠEVČENKO, Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose, *JÖB* 31/1, 1981, 291. Č. MILOVANOVIĆ, Three Levels of Style in Gregory of Nazianzus: the Case of Oration 43, *ClMed* 45, 1994, 198-210, likewise makes a distinction between plain, middle and grand styles in Barham Christian oratory; she connects, however, the distinction not with grammatical particularities but with emotional and esthetic goals of rhetoricians: to instruct the audience, to give them pleasure, and to move their hearts. While the goals are different the esthetic distinction between the three "levels" is blurred: not only all three functions could be carried out simultaneously, but the content, personal feelings and even certain rhetorical-figures could be identical in passages of different levels.

<sup>42</sup> *Ioannis Sardiani Commentarium in Aphthonii Progymnasmata*, ed. H. RABE, Leipzig 1928.

vehicle for expressing the truth than a rhetorical style. John Damaskenos begins his *Enkomion for Barbara* with the statement that the glory of martyrs surpasses rhetorical eloquence and sophisticated skill (par. 1.1-4; Kotter, *Schriften* V, 256), and at the end he affirms that "the skill of rhetorical eloquence" is appropriate for the praise of corporal beauty, proportion of limbs, physical strength "and other ephemeral qualities" (par. 21.5-12). Unfortunately, however, Damaskenos does not summarize the modes of expression proper for the laudation of a saint.

Although critical toward rhetoric, John Damaskenos did not avoid the use of periodic structure or figures of speech, and we have seen that his contemporaries could be skillful in manipulating rhetorical figures. Ancient theorists of rhetoric left behind elaborate classifications of figures of speech: just as Roman law covered practically all forms of juridical transaction and litigation, the ancient theory of rhetoric treats all possible forms of adornment of speech. We do not know whether the writers of the Dark Century studied the corpus of Hermogenes (probably assembled by the early sixth century),<sup>43</sup> but some of them evidently were able to use the "forms" delineated in the corpus (this corpus, it should be recalled, was well known in Byzantium in later periods). More complex is the question of whether they followed the system of seven literary virtues established by Hermogenes: clarity, grandeur, elegance, conciseness, *ethos* (including simplicity, pleasantness, sharpness, comeliness), truth and force. It seems that the rhetorical principles of patristic writings were based on a different foundation, and these tendencies were developed by the authors of the Dark Century.

G. L. Kustas and S. S. Averincev demonstrated that the classical principle of clarity lost its attraction in the age of patristics and the concept of obscurity became one of the leading principles of expression.<sup>44</sup> Philosophically construed, obscurity of expression was linked with the idea of the ineffability of the divine: the world was seen as a riddle manifesting itself in paradoxical ways.

Such a perception of the cosmos accounted to some extent for the choice of stylistic means. Obscurity (rhetorical rather than grammatical) found its expression in enigmatic wording, and accordingly *ainigma* (or an enigmatic parable) was frequently used. The *ainigma* borders on the paradox: since the order of the cosmos is ineffable and its causality is concealed from mankind, or even seems arbitrary to an inexperienced eye, the world reveals itself as a series of oppositions (day and night, the sea and dry land, etc.), and accordingly antithesis and oxymoron acquire an important place in the system of

<sup>43</sup> See on him D. HAGEDORN, *Zur Ideenlehre des Hermogenes*, Göttingen 1964; M. PATILLON, *La théorie du discours chez Hermogène le rhéteur*, Paris 1988.

<sup>44</sup> On obscurity as the principle of Byzantine esthetics see G. L. KUSTAS, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*, Thessalonike 1973, 63-100 and S. S. AVERINCEV, *Poetika vizantijskoj literatury*, Moscow 1977, 129-149.

expression (or "style"). Just as the miracle —by its very nature denying causality— is the cornerstone of composition, so oxymoron —the paradoxical union of contrasts— is the bearer of characterization, ultimately descended from the theological, or rather philosophical, opposition of the human and divine natures in Christ Himself.

Another sequence of ineffability/obscurity is the use of oblique means of explanation. Since full comprehension of the fundamental elements of the universe was impossible, simile and metaphor acquired immense significance as a means of approximation; likeness, while not identical, contained nevertheless some allusion to the archetype, and the symbolic interpretation of visible ("real") things or of proper names had a similar function: the profundity of existence was to be grasped through accidental objects and names.

Another important element of the style of the Dark Century was, as we have seen, monotony of expression. The twentieth-century reader regards stylistic monotony with aversion: it seems crushingly dull and is frequently treated as resulting from a lack of creativity, an absence of inventiveness. The problem, however, is less simple. First of all, philosophically construed, monotony of expression reflects the ontological monadism of the universe and gnoseological monadism of the truth about the universe. The endless repetition of potent signs (such as crosses and ringed stars) on certain Byzantine monuments, including amulets, had a magic purpose —it evoked the concept of continuous protection, of multiplying benefits,<sup>45</sup> and moreover of eternity.

But monotony also had more down-to-earth roots. Recently, David Lodge, in his novel *Therapy*, dwelt (half-seriously) on the phenomenon he calls, after Kierkegaard, "repetition", that corresponds to some extent with our "monotony," and he insisted that real life is more repetitive than not; marital life, says Lodge, consists of an infinite number of repeated ("monotonous") situations, in contrast with the "inventiveness" of an adulterer. The Byzantine esthetic of monotony is, probably, closer to the system of everyday life (at any rate the well-regulated system of medieval society) than the modern search for constant originality; it is "realistic" in the higher, sublime sense of the word.

Transplanted to the level of figures of speech, monotony was enhanced by iteracy (repetitiveness), by various types of pleonasm and synonymics, and, in a different way, by an elaborate parallelism in the structure of kola, especially via [ep]anaphora, a typical example of which was *chairetismos*, in some cases comprised of dozens of members. The accumulation of epithets (particularly those applied to the Mother of God) served the same purpose.

The divestment of both causality and "naturalization" from the plot paved the way for a broad use of hyperbole —not because the writers were naive and gullible, but because their artistic vision was not bound by the laws of nature. The divine and holy surpassed these bounds, went beyond the limits of time and space, and therefore soared high above

<sup>45</sup> H. MAGUIRE, Magic and Geometry in Early Christian Floor Mosaics and Textiles, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 265-274.

the shackles of "reality". Enormity impossible in the "real" world was a natural element of the literary construct. Causality, too, lost its power of argumentation and was consistently supplemented with references to the ultimate authority (biblical and patristic citation). Ševčenko's determining feature of high style, quotation from classical authors, is not applicable to literature of the Dark Century, for it so seldom occurs. On examining the wealth of biblical quotations in Damaskenos (on the basis of the index compiled by Kotter for the fifth volume of the *Schriften* that includes both authentic and spurious texts), we may see that citations from the New Testament are far more numerous than those from the Old Testament, and among the latter those from the Psalms are most frequent. However, one would expect these features to have been characteristic of a low level of style; and this is clearly an inappropriate estimation of Damaskenos.

In bringing to a close our tentative characterization of the style of the Dark Century, we should add two points. First, some of these features turn out to be "generally Byzantine"; that is, they have forerunners in patristic and hagiographical works of the proto-Byzantine epoch and they are extant in many (although not all) works of later periods, reappearing time and again. Second, as we have attempted to show, even in the Dark Century writers were not uniform in their style and the elements of wording we have outlined as "typical" were not to be found everywhere. As so often the case, the actual situation was more complicated than the picture painted in this summary chapter.

## PART TWO

### *The Predominance of Monastic Culture (ca. 775-ca. 850)*

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE MONKS AND THE ARABS: MARTYRDOM OF THE SABAITES (BHG 1200)

Ed. A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Συλλογή παλαιστινῆς καὶ συριακῆς ἀγιολογίας,  
*PPSb* 19/3, 1907, I, 1-41

#### *A. The date and the author*

The anonymous *Martyrion* or *Exegesis* (ἐξήγησις, account or explanation) of the twenty holy fathers of the Great Lavra of St. Sabas slaughtered by the Saracens has survived in a single tenth-century Greek manuscript (ms. Coisl. 303) as well as in two Georgian versions.<sup>1</sup> It is thought that the Arab raid on the monastery took place in 796 or 797 and that the *Martyrion* was written by Stephen the Sabaite. It is worth, however, examining both these data. The date of the martyrdom is based on a paragraph that warrants quoting in full:

“In the 6288th year since the Creation of the world, according to the most precise ecclesiastical calculation, and the 788th since the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ’s birth in flesh, in the fifth indiction, when the blessed patriarch Elias administered the church and province of Jerusalem... a fierce civil war between the tribes of Saracens was waged in Palestine” (ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 2.19-30).

The episcopate of Elias II is dated to the period prior to 787-97 or even 770-97 (R. Janin, *DHGE* 15, 1963, 190f.); the other dates present a riddle. 6288 from the Creation concords with 796 of the Alexandrian era and with 780 according to the Byzantine calculation, neither of which coincides with the fifth indiction (796 corresponds with the fourth and 780 with the third indiction).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. P. BLAKE, Deux lacunes comblées dans la passio XX monachorum Sabaitarum, *AB* 68, 1950, 27-43.

<sup>2</sup> PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Sylloge (and following him BHG) places the martyrdom in 797, S. VAILHÉ-S. PÉTRIDÈS, Saint Jean Paléolaurite, *ROC* 9, 1904, 353, n. 1, prefer 796. V. GRUMEL, L’ère

Towards the end of the *Martyrion*, the hagiographer praises a certain Christopher, "Christ's warrior", who came from Persia, was baptized, became a monk and was decapitated by order of the "chief and *protosymboulos* of the Saracens" (p. 40.24-41.7). The martyrdom of Christopher is also dated: April 14, Tuesday of Holy Week. This date means that Easter Sunday in the year of Christopher's execution fell on April 19—a combination which occurred, within the period of Elias II's episcopate, only in 789 (the next possible date is 800). If we accept this dating, the attack of the Saracens may be taken as having occurred in 788 (the author's dating according to Christ's birth, which coincides with the world era of Julius Africanus). Difficulties, however, do not end at this point: the attack on the Lavra began on Monday March 13 (p. 11.18), this day and date coinciding in 797, not 788 when March 13 fell on a Saturday. Is δευτέρα, Monday, a correct reading? Later, the hagiographer states: "We spent a week (τὴν ἑβδομάδα διελθόντων ἡμῶν)," adding that it was Saturday (p. 14.10-11).

Are these discrepancies a result of the author's ignorance of past events, a slip of the pen committed by the copyist, or the hagiographer's lack of concern with chronology—"freedom with regard to chronology," as Rydén<sup>3</sup> calls it? Whatever the cause, we should be very cautious with the precise dating of the *Martyrion*, although for our present purposes the precise dating is not of vital importance. Suffice it to say that the events took place at the end of the eighth century and that they were told by an author able to collect testimony from personal observation and from eyewitnesses, Greek (p. 1915-1916, 34.16, 36.4-5) and Arab (p. 5.31) alike.

As already mentioned, the *Martyrion* is anonymous in the manuscript. Its traditional attribution to Stephen the Sabaite is based upon a statement at the end of the discourse in which the hagiographer entreats the martyrs to remember "your unworthy servant who brought you this speech (*logos*) as an offering and who weaves hymns" (p. 39.28-30).<sup>4</sup> Since in the *Menaia*, under March 20, there is a canon by Stephen the Sabaite for the Sabaite martyrs, it was natural to identify the anonymous hagiographer as Stephen. This "natural" identification, however, contains two weak points. Firstly, besides designating poetic works (including kanons), the word ὕμνοι was also applied to the praise of saints in prose.

mondiale dans la date du martyre des vingt moines Sabaïtes, *REB* 14, 1956, 207f., tried to demonstrate that there is no contradiction in the date of the martyrdom and that "la date du martyre est sans nul doute 797" (cf. F. HALKIN, Saint Théoctiste, moine sabaïte et martyr († 797), *AB* 73, 1955, repr. in *Id.*, *Martyrs grecs. IIe-VIIIe s.*, London 1974, pt. III, 373f.).

<sup>3</sup> L. RYDÉN, Byzantine Hagiography in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries: Literary Aspects, *Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala, Årsbok* 1986, 75. It sounds ironical when the author of the *Martyrion* proclaims that his chronology is based on "the most precise calculation" (ἀκριβεστάτη ψηφοφορία). Cf. a similar expression in PHOTIOS, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 115 (ed. HENRY II, 86.30-31).

<sup>4</sup> Should we pay any attention to the difference of tenses of the participles προσενηγοῦτος (perfect) and ὑφαίνωντος (present)? Is the plural of ὕμνοι substantial?

Secondly, the author of the *Martyrion* was very fond (as we shall see) of the figure of tautology, and often uses hendiadys; the sentence cited above does not necessarily mean that he produced hymns in addition to the *Martyrion*—he may be saying only that he gave the saints his *logos*-hymn.

The attribution of the *Martyrion* to Stephen the Sabaïte creates an additional difficulty. Leontios of Damascus wrote the *Vita of Stephen*, a monk of the Lavra of St. Sabas, called Thaumaturge, whose disciple Leontios claims to have been. According to the *vita*, Stephen the Thaumaturge died in 794,<sup>5</sup> that is, before the generally accepted date (797) of the martyrdom Leontios is supposedly describing. J. Darrouzès (DSp 4, 1958, 1520-1521; DHGE 15, 1963, 1260-1261) agrees with I. Phokylides<sup>6</sup> who distinguished Stephen the Thaumaturge from another Stephen (d. ca. 807), the nephew of Damaskenos and author of the *Martyrion*. The commemoration of Stephen the Sabaïte, nephew of Damaskenos, is briefly noted in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 170.21-23), separately from that of Stephen the Thaumaturge (col. 354.4-5). The theory of Phokylides-Darrouzès does not solve the enigma, since Leontios, the biographer of the Thaumaturge, states bluntly that it was his hero who wrote the tale (διήγησις) about the barbarians' attack on the Great Lavra (AASS July III, 578B). But the enigma is solved if we assume that the Arab assault occurred not in 797 but 788; this would mean that the *Martyrion* was produced by Stephen the Thaumaturge between 789 and 794.

In the *Vita of Stephen the Thaumaturge*<sup>7</sup> Leontios of Damascus refers both to his personal knowledge of the saint whose disciple and servant he was during Stephen's stay in the caves of Douka, and to the stories he has heard from numerous monks of Mar-Saba. He cites the names of these monks—Eustratios, David, Petronas, and the archpriest of the Lavra Sergios. The monks probably belonged to the generation that succeeded those who experienced the Arab attack, while Sergios the archpriest should be distinguished from the abbas Sergios beheaded by the Arabs (ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 27.22). Rarer is the name of Patrikios, a nephew of one of Leontios' informants, who came from Moab to visit the Lavra (AASS July III, 541D); this Patrikios differs from another Patrikios who was

<sup>5</sup> The date is based on the testimony of the *Vita of Stephen by Leontios of Damascus* (AASS July III, 580c); see M.-F. AUZÉPY, De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIIIe-IXe siècles): Étienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène, *TM* 12, 1994, 185 n. 18; the date (6286) is given according to the Alexandrian era. The same date is given in the Arabic translation of the *vita*, ch. 80.1 (on this, see below, n. 7). There is, however, a problem: Leontios says that Stephen was buried on April 2, τρίτη (i.e. Tuesday; martedì in the Italian translation from Arabic). April 2 in 794 was Wednesday, not Tuesday. A mistake in a day is plausible (the change to the Byzantine era probably did not help matters).

<sup>6</sup> I. PHOKYLIDES, Περί Στεφάνου τοῦ Σαβαΐτου καὶ θαυματουργοῦ καὶ περὶ τῆς ἐν τῇ Λαύρᾳ τοῦ ὁγίου Σάβα σαγῆς μοναχῶν, *Nea Sion* 10, 1910, 64-75.

<sup>7</sup> BHG 1670; ed. AASS July III, 497-584. Arabic biography ed. B. PIRONE, *Leonzio di Damasco. Vita di santo Stefano Sabaita*, Cairo, Jerusalem 1991. On this *vita* see J. C. LAMOREAUX, Some Notes on a Recent Edition of the Life of St. Stephen of Mar Sabas, *AB* 113, 1995, 117-126.

Adrian by his family (or baptismal?) name (τῷ γένει) and who perished heroically during the Arab assault; Stephen praises [the older] Patrikios for his exploit (Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 20.25, 21.18), and when [the younger] Patrikios was introduced to him, Stephen, to the astonishment of his audience, said: "No, you are not the master Patrikios." If we believe Leontios, Stephen died at the age of sixty-nine; he turned ten when his paternal uncle took him to the Lavra where, for fifteen years, he fulfilled various services, including those of baker and of *xenodochos*. At thirty-seven, he dedicated himself completely to God and spent fifteen years in the desert; thereafter he began to receive disciples. Auzépy hypothesized that Stephen (or at least his biographer) had a conflict with the ruling monks of the Lavra:<sup>8</sup> the famous John Damaskenos, one of the brethren and allegedly the uncle of Stephen, does not appear in the *vita* written by Leontios, and Damaskenos' favorite subject of icons remains practically unbroached in the text; only once does Leontios relate how Stephen cured him from a demonic possession by prohibiting him, for a short while, from partaking of the holy Eucharist and from looking at the divine icons (p. 552B). All things considered, the defense of the cult of icons does not provoke in the milieu of Stephen and Leontios such ardor as it had in the works of John; tentatively, Auzépy likens Stephen, in this respect, to Kosmas the Melode.

Another almost contemporary victim of Arab persecution was Romanos the Younger, who was executed in 780; his *Martyrion* survived only in Georgian. In its title it is said that it was authored by Stephen Damaskenos, a monk of the Lavra of St. Sabas.<sup>9</sup> It would be tempting to identify Stephen Damaskenos as Stephen the Thaumaturge, although we have no evidence that the Thaumaturge had connections with Damascus. Peeters, on the basis of circumstantial data, concludes that the *vita* was originally written in Arabic between 780 and 787; the double monasteries mentioned in the *vita*, he argues, were explicitly prohibited in 787. In fact, however, they continued to exist, and it was not until 814 that the patriarch Nikephoros closed all the double monasteries. Further, the *vita* does not speak of a double monastery but of a convent and a male monastery, "monasterium alterum", located side by side (par. 1). At any rate, the hagiographer was unaware that the patriarch Constantine II (754-66) had been an Iconoclast, and he referred to the patriarch as a holy man (*virum sanctum Deique reverentem* [par. 7]). Another difficulty created by the *Martyrion* is the anachronistic mention of Frankish captives (par. 15) in the prison in Baghdad.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> AUZÉPY, De la Palestine, 188-191.

<sup>9</sup> The Georgian text is published by K. KEKELIDZE, Novootkrytyj agiologičeskij pamjatnik ikonoborčeskoj epohi, *Trudy Kievskoj duhovnoj akademii*, June 1910, 201-238. See the Latin translation and commentary by P. PEETERS, St. Romain le néomartyr (± 1 mai 780) d'après un document géorgien, *AB* 30, 1911, 393-427.

<sup>10</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 29 n. 9. Despite this critical observation, ŠEVČENKO follows PEETERS' chronology and accepts that the *Martyrion* was composed between 780 and 787.

Several poets of hymns named Stephen are known; some verses are said to have been written by Stephen, some by Stephen the Monk, others by Stephen Hagiopolite or Stephen Sabaites (not to mention a Calabrian and a Stoudite who belong to other geographical areas).<sup>11</sup> Certain identification of these poets is impossible. As we have already mentioned, the *Menaia* contains, under March 20, a kanon for the fathers of the monastery of St. Sabas attributed to Stephen the Sabaites. Can this hymnographer be the same writer that composed the *Martyrion*? The question probably could not be answered even if we had a critical edition of the text of the kanon. The kanon consists of nine stanzas with an acrostic which does not include the name of the poet; the word στέφανος (crown) is repeated at least twice in the kanon, but this hardly justifies assuming that it alludes to the author's name. Each stanza is concluded with a *theotokion*, and besides this the Theotokos is said to be praised by the taxiarchs of angels and men (*heirmos* of the ninth ode). The slaughter of the martyrs (names are not given) is duly described: the barbarians sent by the "treacherous (δόλιος) Dragon" (whoever he was) beat the saints with cudgels, swords and stones. The poet states that the servants of Christ "were not alarmed by the threat of the tyrants," a sentence more appropriate in the regular "epic" martyrion than in a story of monks beaten by the barbarians (we shall see that the hagiographer stressed that the monks were frightened by the Arabs). Then the hymnographer uses a series of contrasts: the infidel suspected that the poor were rich (πλουτεῖν); the martyrs rejected things perishable (φθαρτά) and acquired things eternal (ἄφθαρτα); and the use of antithesis is not typical of the *Martyrion*.

While it is possible perhaps to attribute these distinctions to the difference of genres, we cannot state with absolute confidence that the author of the kanon was also the author of the *Martyrion*. Let us turn to the text itself.

### B. The purpose of the *Martyrion*

We have already touched upon the sub-genre of the *passion épique*, a work that praised a saint, or group of saints, who refused to yield to a tyrant (a Roman emperor, a Persian king, a governor, or a judge), did not recant their Christian faith, courageously defended it in a disputation ("trial") with the pagan agent, suffered tortures and were executed; their corpses were saved by some faithful men or women and became holy relics. The *Martyrion of St. Romanos the Younger* is set more or less within such a framework: it begins, like most epic martyrion, with a chronological statement ("In the years of the impious king Constantine [V]"), briefly describes Romanos' ascetic exploits, and in par. 5 narrates how

<sup>11</sup> FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 302f.



the saint was taken captive, brought to "Babylon, that is Baghdad" and put in prison. The rest of the *Martyrion* takes place in the prison, where Romanos encountered various people, pious and treacherous alike. One of the fellow captives, a new Judas, falsely accused Romanos of being a former citizen of Emesa (that is, a subject of the caliph); the *princeps fidelium* summoned Romanos to an interrogation during which the saint denied that he originated from Emesa (he was born in Galatia), was proved innocent but was left in jail. The "trial" begins in par. 23: the caliph al-Mahdi (775-85) threatens to execute Romanos unless he confesses his "error" and accepts "fidem nostram" (Islam); the saint naturally rejects the offer, ignores other lavish inducements, and the caliph orders that he be decapitated; the corpse was thrown into the river, and miraculously floated on the surface. In the city of Kallinikos the corpse (together with the head) was dragged from the water, placed in a church and then buried.

The *Martyrion of the Sabaites* has a plot of a different character. Here Stephen relates an Arab attack on the Lavra of St. Sabas; the conflict between the monks and the "barbarians" does not appear to involve a conflict of faith. The attackers were not concerned about the monks' creed but about the monastery's wealth. They demanded an enormous ransom that the monks were unable to pay, and as the "barbarians" saw that there was not much they could seize in the Lavra, they began to torture and slaughter monks, to destroy and set their buildings on fire.

We noted, in concluding Part One, that the confrontation with the Arabs was not a popular topic of Byzantine literature of the eighth century; only one hagiographical text described the execution of Constantinopolitan *archons* in Jerusalem, and in this case it is not clear whether the text was contemporary with the events it describes or of later origin. Now, however, we find ourselves before two hagiographical works dealing with saints martyred by the Arabs: while the chronology of Romanos' *Passio* is a little dubious, the *Martyrion of the Sabaites* is unquestionably a work of the late eighth century. More open to doubt is the case of two other saintly victims of Arab persecution: Elias of Heliopolis beheaded in 779<sup>12</sup> and Bakchos the Younger who lived in the reign of Irene and Constantine VI.<sup>13</sup> The texts are preserved in manuscripts of the tenth century, a secure *terminus ante quem*. But there is no evidence to indicate that the *vitae* were written very soon after the martyrdoms.

<sup>12</sup> BHG 578-579, see PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Sylloge*, 52.10, 55.28-29. Nevertheless H. LOPAREV, *Vizantijskie žitija svjatyh VIII-IX vekov*, *VizVrem* 19, 1912, 36-40 dated his death in 795, and this date is accepted by A. P. RUDAKOV, *Očerki vizantiskoj kul'tury po dannym grečeskoj agiografii*, Moscow 1917, 239.

<sup>13</sup> BHG 209; ed. F. COMBEFIS, *Christi martyrum lecta trias*, Paris 1666, 61-126. The hagiographer indicates a precise date —6296 from the Creation, or 787/8— but what does this date designate? Is this the date of his martyrdom as it is accepted in BHG (*Novum auctarium*, p. 39), of his birth (LOPAREV, *Vizantijskie žitija*, 33-35) or of the wedding of his parents (F. A. DEMETRAKOPOULOS, *Ἁγιος Βάκχος ὁ Νέος*, *EPhSpA* 26, 1979, 331-363)?

Stephen, the hagiographer of the twenty Sabaites, was conscious that he was writing a *martyrion* of a new type, and he himself emphasized the polemical character of his work. The first point of his polemic is, in a sense, social: "It is strange and exceptional (ξένον καὶ ἑξαισίον)," he says, that not all the martyrs of the Lavra were perfect in theory and knowledge but some of them were novices without any [religious] education (ἰδιῶται τῷ λόγῳ); truly, he continues, not all those who have received a good education (προπεπαιδευμένοι) are able to master their passions and curb their desire to preserve their lives (Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 31.4-8). Another point is even more relevant for our purposes: Stephen questions the idea that only those who perished because of their resistance to the cult of idols (the traditional feature of the epic martyria) are entitled to be called martyrs (p. 28.20-22). His heroes, he insists, are even greater than the victims of pagan persecutions: when one dies in order not to recant Christ, one clearly understands the disaster of becoming an apostate. The Sabaites gave their lives in order to remain virtuous, and this was an act of extreme courage; especially worthy were those who died trying to save the lives of their brethren (p. 28.30-29.1, 29.31-32). Stephen deliberates further on: those who accept death for Christ's commandments, even for the least (ἐλαχίστη) of His commandments, are greater than those who were executed for the belief (πίστις) in Christ (p. 28.24-30). The monks of the Lavra acquired a treble crown since they suffered death *a.* for Christ, *b.* for the Lavra, and *c.* for their brethren and fathers (p. 30.2-4, 5-9, 12-13). To justify his opinion the hagiographer inserts a long quotation from one of the most authoritative fathers of the church, John Chrysostom (p. 32.19-34.2).

The innovative approach of the author of the *Martyrion*, as he himself understood it, lay in the perception of sanctity as an ethical category rather than one of pure faith. Such an approach distinguishes the *Martyrion of the twenty Sabaites* from that of Romanos, which is, in general, more traditional. While the Sabaites were willing to die so as to save the lives of their fellow monks, the author of Romanos' *Martyrion* underlines that in the jail where the saint was confined there were traitors who calumniated their fellow Christians in order to ingratiate themselves with their captors.

Another point of difference was the attitude toward Iconoclasm. The author of the *Martyrion of the Sabaites* shows no interest in the Iconoclastic conflict or in Constantinople in general.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the *Martyrion of Romanos* begins with a reference to the "impious" Constantine V; this emperor, an *eikonomachos*, who destroyed the icons of saints and introduced everywhere his ignominious image (par. 7), and who convinced the illiterate throng that monks were venerating idols (par. 12), is mentioned several times. Vituperation of Constantine is misdirected in Romanos' *Martyrion*, since the martyr is a victim of the Arab caliph not of the Iconoclastic emperor; in order to justify his criticism and to contrast Romanos with the emperor whom the martyr has never met, the

<sup>14</sup> I. ŠEVČENKO, Constantinople Viewed from the Eastern Provinces in the Middle Byzantine Period, *HUKSt* 3/4, pt. 2, 1979/80, repr. in *Id.*, *Ideology*, pt. VI, 735f.

hagiographer introduces into his tale two monks, John and Symeon, who had fled from “the perverse emperor”, trekked across the Orient and landed in the same prison as Romanos (par. 8). Other monks were exiled by Constantine to Cyprus, whence they were brought captive to Baghdad (par. 17). Another prisoner is the *princeps* (*archon*?) George, Constantine’s former collaborator, who condemns the icons as idols (par. 9). In the prison the captives continued to debate the issue of icons, and the Iconoclasts (including George) wanted the pious fathers executed (par. 14). Thus the theme of the Iconoclastic persecutions plays an important part in Romanos’ *Martyrion*, although it seems to be awkwardly superimposed onto the main plot—the story of a pious prisoner slaughtered by the Arabs because of his Christian faith. How may this difference between the two texts in their approach to Iconoclasm be explained? Should we assume that it is accidental, or that Stephen has changed his view with the passing of time, or that the *martyria* were written by two different hagiographers, or even that the Iconoclastic theme appeared in Romanos’ *Martyrion* as a result of a translation into Georgian? Whatever the answer—and the available evidence does not allow us to draw firm conclusions—the *Martyrion of the Sabaites* is compositionally more coherent than that of Romanos.

### C. Composition

In the conclusion to Part One (see above, p. 160ff.) we looked at how important the problem of esthetic monotony was for the writers of the Dark Century and how they dealt with it. The development of the plot in the *Martyrion of the Twenty Sabaites* is anything but monotonous; it is tightly knit, consistent and energetic. Stephen distinguishes, to the delight of modern formalists, the “run” or course, of narration (ὁ δρόμος τοῦ λόγου) from the inner logic, the “sequence”, of the tale (ὁ εἰρμός τῆς διηγήσεως), and promises, after a digression, to steer the course of narration to the sequence of the narrative (Papadopoulos-Kerameus, p. 27.18-19).<sup>15</sup> He directs his story-telling by using a variety of parenthetical phrases: “as the narration will show” (p. 22.5), “as was recounted above” (p. 34.20, 36.12), “I shall talk of him [Sergios] later” (p. 27.23), or “This [I shall tell] later, while now we return to the sequence of the narration (ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ λόγου συνέχειαν)” (p. 19.32-33).

The *Martyrion* begins with a short preamble. The author was enjoined by his master, the bishop Basil, to describe the disastrous attack of the “barbarians” on the Lavra of St. Sabas and the slaughter of the fathers, witnessed by Stephen (p. 2.7-11). Thus the passage contains a summary of the events to be described. After this preamble, the hagiographer

<sup>15</sup> Both expressions, τοῦ λόγου δρόμος and εἰρμός τῆς διηγήσεως, have been used by some patristic writers. Stephen’s innovation seems to lie in the contrast of the two notions.

comes immediately to the lamentable situation in Palestine created by “the great civil war of the Saracen tribes” (p. 2.29-30), when many cities were plundered and the inhabitants of the countryside fled their homes. From more or less remote locations (Askalon, Gaza, Sariphaia) the danger moves closer to the author’s habitat—Jerusalem, the Lavra of St. Chariton, the Ancient Lavra. Stephen characterizes the situation as a dreadful calamity (πάνδεινα κακά) (p. 4.32). The natural question, one might think, is: Why does God allow the attacks of the infidels? The hagiographer inverts the question: Why does the infidels’ attack fail? It is paradoxical, he asserts, that “some old neighbors [of the Lavra], enemies of Christ and of the Church,” desired to rob the monks, and that their leaders incited the mob against “us” (p. 5.15-23). In response to the prayer of St. Sabas, he continues, God “fenced his flock, dispersed the adversaries... and marvelously arranged our defense” (p. 5.25-28). If we believe Leontios, the Lavra’s relations with “the neighboring (πλησιόχωροι) Arabs” were relatively friendly. Leontios mentions several times Arab herdsmen (AASS July III, 518C, 519E) and hunters (p. 543D); the Arab goatherds call themselves Stephen’s neighbors (p. 542C). The infidels were not deprived of pious visions: the neighboring Arabs, says Leontios (p. 514C), saw the light at the casket of the famous hermit Theoktistos the Great. Since in the epilogue of the *Vita* Leontios even suggests that Stephen displayed sympathy and respect for Christians and Arabs alike (p. 584A), so much the greater must have been his shock at the plundering of the Lavra by an Arab horde.

By using the story of the civil war, Stephen prepares the reader for the Arab attack on the Lavra; afterwards, however, his account becomes more dilatory and he delays the terrible moment. He puts it plainly: the Devil and the enemies of the Lavra incited the multitude of the barbarians to attack “us” at daybreak (ὁρθρίῳ), but the almighty Lord foiled their plans: the robbers found, in a neighboring village, jars with a copious amount of wine, became drunk and started a row (p. 6.9-17). The attempt to transfer the conflict to the supernatural level (the Devil against God) did not work; simple inebriation saves the Lavra, albeit for a short while.

Time passes, and the fathers, in anxiety and fear, prepare themselves to endure, to stand firm and bear the ordeal and danger (a tautology, p. 7.30-31). Stephen reproduces their prayer, encasing it in a stylistic framework. He begins with the statement that the monks dedicate themselves (ἀναθέμενοι) to Christ, and he repeats at the end of the episode that they dedicated their souls and bodies to Christ (p. 7.27-28 and 9.10). The monks still had time to escape the danger, but preferred to stay put lest the people roundabout plunder the Lavra (p. 9.10-14). The earthly theme of property enters the tale.

Stephen senses the impropriety of the theme, so he deviates from it in order to emphasize the salutary role of the Lavra. He praises the blessed fathers who died for Christ, and compares them with Job and the apostle Peter, not failing to mention that Christ’s mighty hand protected [the faithful] in the midst of danger (p. 10.18-19).

Here the leisurely pace of the story-telling ends. The monks who heard [rumors] that the “barbarians” had dispersed expected to spend a quiet Lent, but suddenly they were disturbed by a din and shouting, emphasized in the narrative by an onomatopoeic

alliteration: κατὰ καιρὸν κρουσμάτων καὶ κραυγῶν τὸν κτύπον (p. 11.16-17). The monks ran (δρομαῖοι) up the hill (1.17) and saw the enemy. Some fathers started negotiations by trying to explain to the adversary that they are peaceful people and get along well with the Arabs, and even offered to regale the Saracens. The answer they received was blunt: "We came not for food (βρωμάτων) but for money (χρημάτων)" (a rhyming assonance, p. 12.10-11). Since the monks were unable to pay, they were beaten and their buildings were set on fire; a series of metaphors invigorate the image of physical fire: the "barbarians", inflamed (ἐξαφθέντες) by wrath, are the "charcoal of the desert" (p. 13.9), and the monks, while observing the flames and smoke, were put to the torch (ἐπυρπολούμεθα) in their hearts (1.17).

The attackers retreated but the respite was shortlived. On Saturday evening, messengers from the Ancient Lavra came running (δρομαῖοι), in haste, covered with sweat (p. 14.13-14), to warn the monks of Mar-Saba of an imminent attack; then two more messengers came, this time from the monastery of St. Euthymios; they walked hastily (ἐσπευσμένως), panting from the race (δρόμῳ) and could hardly speak (p. 15.15-19). These words related to speed add force to the tension of the narrative and stress the impotence of the monks who could but stretch their hands toward heaven and pray for divine grace.

The denouement follows. Stephen prepares his audience by exclaiming: "How could I evoke, without tears, the memory of this horrible and miserable hour?" (p. 16.31-32), and then, in a terse manner, he depicts the slaughter in general terms (p. 17.6-23) as well as the fate of individual monks: the tortures inflicted on John, the *hegoumeniarchos* (the word is not recorded in Lampe; Stephen explains it as the term used for the official dealing with visitors accommodated in the so-called *hegoumeneion*) (p. 17.27-18.9); the murder of Sergios Damaskenos (p. 18.14-19.27), whose corpse was later found; and the exploit of Adrian Patrikios, who was executed after having saved the lives of four brethren hidden in a cave (p. 20.10-22.5). Thereafter Stephen relates how the captains of the robbers demanded 4,000 gold coins from the monks, who denied having such an amount of gold; the *oikonomos* stretched his hands in the form of a cross (σταυροειδῶς) (p. 22.25-26) in support of his words, paradoxically a gesture of victory, typical of Moses leading the fugitive Jews across the Red Sea. Two interwoven themes follow: the monks' steadfastness and solidarity (they did not betray the physician Thomas whom the "barbarians" demanded [p. 23.21-24.2] —a parallel to the exploit of Patrikios) and the cruelty of the Arabs who tormented the "determined and brave" fathers by smoke (p. 25.3-17), and maltreated and beat the men who escaped the flames and smoke (p. 26.6). Finally, the tormentors retreated (p. 26.16); not only the high point, but the eventful part of the story is over.

Even though Stephen stresses that he is inclined to direct —metaphorically— the course (δρόμος) of the story back to the facts (p. 27.18-19), the hectic movement of preceding episodes is not revived. The last section of the discourse comprises a *threnos* for the victims, especially those who suffocated in the smoke, the description of the funeral and

the promise of the Heavenly Kingdom to those who triumphed over their passions (p. 28.3), and the justification of the monks' sanctity. Stephen narrates some miracles, although they are not striking: two monks had a vision of a certain Kosmas who had been killed during the attack (p. 31.21-24); rain, on the day of the funeral, filled the cisterns of the Lavra (p. 35.17-20); the "barbarians" caught a lethal disease (p. 35.24-32), and a Syrian priest learned the Greek language with the help of the martyrs (p. 36.4-23). The *Martyrion* ends with a *makarismos* (p. 36.26-39.4. "We are blessed because of you," says thereafter the hagiographer, p. 39.10) and a prayer in which Stephen entreats the martyrs to intercede on behalf of the Church that needs peace and order (p. 39.23-27) (a reference to the Iconoclastic dispute?) and of the author himself.

The plot of the *Martyrion* is elaborately constructed. The action of the story takes place over a short time span (approximately a week), and the author is attentive to the movement of time. Whether his chronological data are true or not does not matter for his artistic approach; what matters is that he likes to indicate the day and even the hour of the happenings. The space within which the story takes place is limited —the Lavra of St. Sabas— and the world outside serves only to prepare the way for the culmination of events: the heroes thrive (spiritually), perish and are buried on the terrain of the Lavra, and the story of the *Martyrion* is not distracted by references to, or recollections of, the monks' previous monastic residences. The action is not dragged out monotonously. It moves fast and the vocabulary of the tale emphasizes this movement: the word δρόμος is one of Stephen's favorites —we have quoted it several times. Further examples include Sergios Damaskenos who left the Lavra δρόμῳ (p. 18.28) before being stopped by the Arab guards, and the hagiographer speaks metaphorically about the race (δρόμος) of asceticism (p. 28.13). The sight (θέα) and movement (κίνησις) of incidental objects (p. 15.12) frightened the monks as they were waiting for the hostile attack to occur at any moment.

Unlike the *Miracles of St. Artemios* or the romance of *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, the *Martyrion of the Twenty Sabaites* is not built of "parallel" (repetitive) "bricks" which could be multiplied or omitted without damaging the construction. Here the composition is coherent, systematic, leading from exposition to climax and then "dissolved" in the moral evaluation of the martyrdom.

#### D. Characters, setting, and wording

The hero of the *Martyrion* is collective, designated as brethren or fathers, sometimes as the pronoun of the first person plural "we". Stephen names several of the twenty martyrs, but he does not contrast individuals with the community; they are conscious members of the Lavra and they are ready to accept death and tortures for the sake of the Lavra. This

collectivity of protagonists does not transform them into the faceless aggregation of superhuman and emotionless actors so common in epic passions. Whereas the heroes of epic passions enter the ordeal without fear, the Sabaites become human and therefore more heroic because they meet death after having overcome their natural apprehension. Their emotions are vivid, possibly due to Stephen's personal involvement in the events.

"We", he says, "looked at the buildings in flames" (during the first attack) "and we felt ineffable pain, dizziness" (σκότωσις, the first meaning of the word being "darkening", it is used here as contrasted with φλόγες, "flames") "and helplessness, we directed our eyes to heaven, waiting for help from above, imploring St. Sabas for his assistance" (p. 13.15-22) "and we were afraid (δείσαντες) of new assaults" (l. 26). "Even the retreat of the Arabs did not alleviate our fear (φόβος)." "We were afraid (ἐδεδίεμεν) that they might return. Until the sunset and the eclipse of light we stayed without moving (ἀμετακίνητοι), looking in all directions, as though expecting them to come back; from dawn to late evening we remained in the same place, raising supplications and prayers, seized by the same dread (δέει) (p. 13.29-14.2)." In another passage he says, "We were in anxiety, fear, distress and confusion" (p. 15.14-15). Stephen's protagonists, unlike Romanos the Younger and unnumbered other martyrs, are not supermen, they are human beings suffering fear but nevertheless ready to die for the community.

As for their adversary, the Arabs lack human qualities as well as individual features. They are barbarians, robbers, the pupils of the serpent, the children of the viper, relentless torturers and murderers. Minor characters beyond the two camps are few. While the image of the Arabs is vague and conventional, minor characters are still able to take on "naturalistic" traits such as those seen in the *Miracles of St. Artemios*. Thus Stephen tells the story of a Syrian priest who desired to learn the Greek "dialect" but found the task difficult and laborious. Finally, the protodeacon Anastasios, one of the martyrs, appeared to him in a dream, told the priest to stretch out his tongue, took a rag, rubbed and wiped the tongue and cleansed it of a thick stickiness (p. 36.11-18). In this way the priest became fluent in Greek.

Although focusing on narration and movement, Stephen does not avoid descriptions of the setting in which events take place. It is not out-of-place (ἄτοπον), he says, to depict the character of the place (τὴν θέσιν τοῦ τόπου) (p. 24.3), and after this theoretical statement he describes in detail a cave in which the monks arranged a church with its *hapsides*, *diakonikon* and *skeuophylakion*, and a secret underground path leading from the chapel to the *hegoumeneion*. Stephen describes in detail the wounds of the fathers (p. 13.1-5) and, later on, the cure applied by abbas Thomas to help the wounded monks (p. 31.27-32.3).

Digressions and descriptions slow down the rapid pace of the story, and iteracy serves the same purpose, with the repetition of single words or phrases. Thus in the description of the second attack, Stephen relates that some monks tried to hide (περικρύβειν) in caves and fissures (p. 17.25-26), and at the close of the same episode he repeats that monks

attempted to flee and hide (κρυβῆναι) in a cave or in holes in the rocks (p. 20.4-5, cf. also p. 20.15-16). Pleonasm or tautology is common in the *Martyrion*, and it also slows down the course of events presented. In its simplest form it comprises the application of synonyms such as φεύγοντες καὶ τρέχοντες (p. 8.18) or θορύβου καὶ ταραχῆς (p. 14.32); in other cases construction becomes more complex. Thus, in describing Arab clashes in Palestine, Stephen combines a series of tautologies with anaphora: the brigands committed (εἰργάσαντο) so many disorderly and lawless acts (ἀταξίας καὶ ἀθεμιστίας), committed (εἰργάσαντο) so much robbery and plundering (πραιδίας καὶ πραγμάτων ἄρπαγας), and caused (ἔδρασσαν) so much evil bloodshed and slaughter (αἱματοχυσίας καὶ ἀνδρακτασίας), and so on (p. 3.10-12). In the description of the slaughter, the hagiographer combines three tautologies with two similes creating an intricate picture: "No woodcutter or lumberer attacks so relentlessly a forest rich in trees as these cruel, beastly and inhuman barbarians struck, pitiless and merciless, as in butchery, the flesh of the fathers" (p. 17.6-10). In the last section the flow of events becomes dilatory, and it is precisely at this point that Stephen introduces the *makarismos* of the martyrs consisting of 18 kola extolling "the blessed fathers" who are adorned with a variety of epithets, such as πανόλβιοι, πανόσιοι, πανάριστοι, πανένδοξοι, πανάρετοι (p. 36-38).

Quotations are a stock feature of Byzantine story-telling, and they also slow down the stream of narration. Stephen uses them no more than any other Byzantine writer. He does, however, dwell on the theory of citation: "My poor and formless tale," he says after having quoted Chrysostom, "becomes adorned and ornate by the masterpiece of the teacher [Chrysostom], as a diadem inlaid with a priceless emerald" (p. 34.5-7). His rhetoric serves the goal of adornment, but it serves also the purpose of slowing down the pace of narration.

In this vivid and original narrative, metaphors and similes play a less significant role. Usually they are stereotypes, trade marks rather than independent pictures: a lethal fish-net (p. 20.7), locust (p. 4.27-28), wild boars and lions (p. 5.2), wolves (p. 17.16), a flock (p. 5.26), mules (p. 26.28), dogs (p. 25.18, 35.30). Occasionally an extended simile surpasses a simple comparison: thus Stephen compares the Lavra (miraculously preserved by the mighty hand of Christ-God in order to show his omnipotent and invincible power and his care and love of the monastery) to a [single] grape which remained in the vineyard after harvesting (p. 5.6-9). The word as signifier was of more value to Stephen than the image evoked by the word.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE MONKS AND THE ICON THE FIRST ICONODULIC BIOGRAPHY: STEPHEN THE YOUNGER (BHG 1666)

Ed. PG 100, 1069-1186; new ed. M.-F. AUZÉPY, *La vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre*, Aldershot 1997 [Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 3]

#### *A. The author and the date*

The *Vita of Stephen the Younger* was written by his namesake, Stephen the deacon of St. Sophia. We know nothing about this hagiographer. S. Efthymiadis has suggested that he could be identical with the deacon Stephen, a participant of the Council of 787, who is characterized as *notarius* and *referendarius*.<sup>1</sup> However, this suggestion can be neither proved nor disproved. The name Stephen is common, and the chronological gap between the two is no less than twenty years. According to his own words (PG 100, 1072C; Auzépy, 89.19), the Deacon wrote the saint's biography forty-two years after St. Stephen's execution. The precise date of the execution is not indicated in the *Vita* (it is only said that the saint was born after the first year of the reign of Emperor Artemios-Anastasios, that is 6222 from the Creation [col. 1073C= Auzépy, 91.11], i.e. 713/4, and after the beginning of the episcopate of Germanos (in 715) [col. 1076D= Auzépy, 93.9; 94.22-24], and that he died at the age of fifty-three [col. 1177D= Auzépy, 171.28-29], which gives a date somewhere around 766 or even 768). On the basis of the data given by Patriarch Nikephoros and Theophanes, C. Mango places Stephen's death in November 765.<sup>2</sup> If we take at face value

<sup>1</sup> S. EFTHYMIADIS, *The Life of St. Stephen the Younger* (BHG 1666), *Hellenika* 43, 1993, 206.

<sup>2</sup> C. MANGO, *Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*, Washington 1990 [CFHB XIII. Dumbarton Oaks Texts X], 222; cf. M.-F. ROUAN (sc. AUZÉPY), *Une lecture 'iconoclaste' de la*

the deacon Stephen's assertion that he wrote the *Vita* forty-two years after the saint's death, then the text has to have been produced in 807/10.<sup>3</sup>

In another passage, the hagiographer indicates that some of his contemporaries maintained the fashion of shaving beards, a fashion popular in the time of Constantine V; and he continues by saying that even though they had turned seventy, they remained faithful to the emperor (col. 1133CD= Auzépy, 138.3-6). Even if we assume that by mentioning this age Stephen is only alluding to the last term of life, that is old age in general, it is possible to think that the supporters of Constantine (who died in 775) were very old while the Deacon was writing the *Vita*. In any event, he was the saint's younger contemporary: he asserts that he was able to get information from the saint's acquaintances and disciples, as well as from confidants of Constantine V (col. 1184B= Auzépy, 175.22-25).

Unlike the *Martyrion of the twenty Sabaites*, the *Vita of Stephen* is a consistently Constantinopolitan work. Even though its world is extensive and broad (the hagiographer mentions Lycia, Syliaion [in Pamphylia], Syke [in Cilicia], Cyprus, Tripolis, Tyre, Joppa, areas on the northern shore of the Black Sea, etc.), the *Vita* is focused on Constantinople. The author is aware of Constantinopolitan topography, mentioning the palace of Sophianae, Chalke, Blachernae, the Forum Bovis, the Staurion cross-road, the "public place" of Milion with its Iconoclastic pictorial program, the harbor of near-by Chalcedon, St. Sophia and some other churches: the chapel of the martyr Theodore, the church of St. Pelagios, the monastery of Monokionion, the monastery of Dios. He speaks of the prison of Phiale at the Palace (col. 1129 = Auzépy, 135.9), of the "state" jail named the "sacred Praitonion" (col. 1160B= Auzépy, 158.11), of the ἡλιακὸς τοῦ Φάρου (col. 1156= Auzépy, 154.25), of the green fields within the walls of Constantinople (col. 1180B= Auzépy, 172.15) and of the anti-fire wells or pumps (ὕδροστάται τῶν ἐμπρησμῶν, col. 1176C= Auzépy, 69.29).

Not only did the compiler belong to the clergy of the capital, but his hero was born in Constantinople to a father who had no office, but possessed "sufficient means" (cf. II Cor. 9.8) earning his living by manual work (col. 1073C= Auzépy, 91.17-18). The hagiographer emphasizes that the saint was a man not alien in Constantinople, but "ours" (col. 1073C= Auzépy, 91.10). He indicates the precise location of his father's house —on the imperial thoroughfare, near the so-called Staurion and the mansions called Konsta (col. 1073D= Auzépy, 91.19-21). Stephen the Younger received his education in the capital studying the Holy Scripture (col. 1081BC= Auzépy, 97.10-11), and it does not matter for our purposes that the writer drew this passage from Cyril of Scythopolis. The saint dwelt for the most part of his adult life in a monastery on Mount Auxentios, near the capital, and the Deacon is keen to stress that his hero attained great reputation in Constantinople, especially among

vie d'Étienne le Jeune, *TM* 8, 1981, 420 n. 17. P. DEVOS, 'Lumière et lumière' dans trois vies de saints, *AB* 111, 1993, 249, prefers 764. G. HUXLEY, On the *Vita* of St. Stephen the Younger, *GRBS* 18, 1977, 106, is more cautious and dates Stephen's demise "in the persecutions of the 760s".

<sup>3</sup> AUZÉPY, *La vie d'Étienne le jeune*, 8-9, dates the composition of the text in 809.

those inhabitants of the city who were Orthodox and pious (col. 1104D= Auzépy, 115.5). The ordeal and death of Stephen occurred on the streets and in the Hippodrome of the capital. In the lemma to the *Vita* in the Neapolitan manuscript II.C.26 (11th c.) the scribe emphasized that Stephen was martyred "here in Constantinople" (Auzépy, 87.7) and that the discourse was delivered in the Great Church of Byzantium.<sup>4</sup>

Stephen the Deacon is not much interested in commercial activity, whether within Constantinople or without. The saint's father was probably a craftsman, but the hagiographer is silent about his precise profession. Other men of business are few; we meet only one. A small-time trader who fried fish on the Forum Bovis was among Stephen's tormentors (col. 1177AB= Auzépy, 170.2). On the other hand, the men engaged in the state apparatus are lavishly represented. The Deacon knows several emperors: Artemios-Anastasios, Theodosios III, Leo III "born in Syria", and especially Constantine V, Stephen's arch-enemy, as well as his wife Eudokia whom he dubs adulterous (col. 1169C= Auzépy, 165.88-9), and Constantine's heir, Leo IV. Two patriarchs appear in the *Vita*: the Orthodox Germanos and the Iconoclast Anastasios. Numerous partisans of Constantine V are active in the story: bishops (of Ephesus, Nikomedeia, Nakoleia) and laymen such as Sisinius Pastillas and Basil Trikakabos; some are characterized as "great men of the palace" (col. 1140BC= Auzépy, 142.9). Some minor characters held specific offices: *antigrapheus* (col. 1140C= Auzépy, 142.10), *tachydromos* (col. 1128A= Auzépy, 132.14), *proximos* (col. 1169C, 1172A= Auzépy, 165.15 and 166.5); there was a customs house at the Gulf of Nikomedeia administered by the "archcontroller of customs" or *phorologos* (col. 1125C= Auzépy, 131.26-27; 175.4 and 8) who had his notary (col. 1184A= Auzépy, 175.7). *Patrikios* Kallistos, one of the notable *megistanes* of the day, was Constantine's staunch supporter (col. 1121D-1124A= Auzépy, 129-132, 142, 146, 148); another *patrikios*, Anthes, functioned as the emperor's *ek prosopou* (deputy) during Constantine's expedition against the Bulgarians (col. 1128AB= Auzépy, 132.19). The Deacon employs the archaic term *archsatrap* to designate governors: Theophanes surnamed Lardotyros was the *archsatrap* (or *strategos*) of Crete (col. 1164BC= Auzépy, 160.13); the name of the *archsatrap* of Thrace (col. 1156B= Auzépy, 154.6) is not indicated.

G. Huxley has demonstrated that the *Vita* contains historical incongruities. It can also be shown that the hagiographer incorporated in his text fragments from Cyril of Scythopolis<sup>5</sup> and other writers (e.g., Andrew of Crete's *Enkomion of St. Patapios* and possibly the *Martyrion of the Sixty in Jerusalem*,<sup>6</sup> unless this text is of later origin). Nevertheless, the *Vita* is a remarkable and innovative literary work: just as the *Martyrion*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. H. DELEHAYE, *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum graecorum Bibliothecae Nationalis Neapolitanae*, *AB* 21, 1902, 388f., no. 10.

<sup>5</sup> S. GILL, *The Life of Stephen the Younger by Stephen the Deacon*. Debts and Loans, *OChP* 6, 1940, 114-139.

<sup>6</sup> See S. GERO, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the reign of Leo III*, Louvain 1973 [Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 346, Subsidia 41], 177 n. 4.



of the Sabaites is practically the first hagiographical text dealing with the problem of Arab persecutions, so the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* opens the door for Iconodulic hagiography, which was to become extremely popular in the ninth century.

At the very beginning of the discourse, the Deacon justifies the use of the icon, juxtaposing it with Holy Scripture: both reveal to us "the virtue of the prototype" and incite divine zeal, the icons being produced by painters possessed of skill, and the written word coming from those who were initiated by the Spirit in the divine knowledge (col. 1069B-1072A= Auzépy, 88.1-20). The saint's mother had a vision of a woman identical with the Virgin represented in the Blachernae church (Stephen uses the pluperfect ἐτετύπωτο) on an icon with the son in her lap (col. 1076BD; 92.9-13= Auzépy, 93.3-4); this was probably the same icon of the Theotokos to which she prayed and which the author defined as ἀντιφωνήτρια (col. 1080AB= Auzépy, 95.3-4 and 13). The hagiographer describes the destruction of icons by Leo III (col. 1112A, 1113A= Auzépy, 119.21-22; 121.16) and particularly Leo's attempt to burn the Chalke icon of Christ (col. 1085C= Auzépy, 100.17-101.10), when pious women came to defend the image, killed the *spatharios* who was assigned to take the icon down, and attacked the Iconoclastic patriarch Anastasios (it does not matter for our purposes whether the story about "the women's revolt" is legendary or not).<sup>7</sup> We are told about the wife of a jailer who venerated icons and secretly kept in her chest three images: of the Virgin with the son, of Peter and of Paul (col. 1164A= Auzépy, 159.26-29). On a *diskos* there were images of Christ, his Mother and John the Baptist (col. 1144A= Auzépy, 144.19-20) —probably one of the earliest representations of the *Deesis*. The writer metaphorically defines the icon as the door leading to God who gave us the mind for penetration (καθομοίωσις, lit. assimilation) into the prototype, the tool to approach the intellectual and spiritual world by means of material objects (col. 1113AB= Auzépy, 122.1-6). He refers to the story of St. Mary of Egypt who repented and was saved by contemplating an icon (col. 1152A= Auzépy, 150.16-18; although the passage is borrowed to Andrew of Crete, the words ἐγγύη and μετάνοια used by Stephen derive from the episode as recorded in the *Vita of Mary*, erroneously attributed to Sophronios).

Time and again the hagiographer protests against Leo III's and Constantine V's rejection of the cult of icons, which the emperors contemptuously called idols (col. 1084C, 1112B, 1121B etc.= Auzépy, 98.28; 120.3 etc.), and the fact that these emperors proclaimed monks worshippers of idols and ἀμνημόνευτοι, "unmindful" or "damned to be forgotten", and their habit "the garb of obscurity (or darkness)" (col. 1112A, 1117A= Auzépy, 120.2-3; 149.17). The Deacon inveighs against the Iconoclasts who destroyed the pictures of ecumenical councils and replaced them with Satanic races (col. 1172AB= Auzépy, 166.9-17). The list of examples can be readily expanded.

<sup>7</sup> Much has been written about the image of Chalke; see the thorough analysis of the related texts by M.-F. AUZÉPY, La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalce par Léon III: propagande ou réalité? *Byzantion* 60, 1990, 451f., 485f.

Stephen the Deacon wrote after the Council of Nicaea II which had rehabilitated the cult of icons; looking back in time, the Iconodules began the heroization of their past, and the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* was the first Constantinopolitan panegyric of a saintly Iconodule (here it should be pointed out that the date of the Arabic [?] *Vita of Romanos the Younger* is not certain, and at any rate must have originated in a different geographical milieu).

### B. Composition

While the anonymous author of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* produced a classic example of a monotonous composition, Stephen the Sabaite described events in accordance with the principle of the unity of time and space. Stephen the Deacon suggested a third approach to the composition of discourse: a biography that, by definition, had its beginning and end. Let us examine it step by step.

After an exordium (PG 100, 1069-1073= Auzépy, 88.1-91.4), the hagiographer tells the story of Stephen's origin and birth which he considers a single unit: "Such is," he formulates after the presentation, "the entrance (προπύλαια) of our father Stephen inspired by God" (col. 1080D= Auzépy, 96.15). And a little further on: these are "all-delighting and true stories (διηγήματα) about [his] conception, birth, name giving and baptism" (col. 1081A= Auzépy, 96.14-15). Afterward the author introduces the next unit: the tale (λόγος) about his exploits "furnished by God".<sup>8</sup> A new "chapter" begins: the history of Iconoclasm, at that time bound to Stephen's biography only by loose chronological links. "In the years of his studies" (col. 1084B= Auzépy, 98.14-15), Leo "born in Syria" equated the icons with idols and deposed the patriarch Germanos who had resisted Iconoclasm. In the next unit, the Deacon returns to the saint: Stephen's parents departed from "heretical Constantinople" to Mount Auxentios near Chalcedon (col. 1088AB= Auzépy, 101.17-27). Here the author launches into what could seem a "historical" digression devoted to St. Auxentios, the founder of the community, and his successors. In fact, however, the history of Auxentios' monastery is closely connected with the life of the hero. For a short while two themes run parallel: John, the father superior of the monastery, tonsured Stephen at the age of ten (Stephen displayed moral perfection), John foresaw and lamented Stephen's destiny under the "burners of icons" (εἰκονοκαῦσαι —is the word an invention of Stephen the Deacon?

<sup>8</sup> The epithet used here, θεοπάροχος (col. 1081A), is indicated in Lampe as a new word with a reference to the *Vita of Stephen*; it was used also by Theodore of Stoudios (see FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, 935 index) and earlier, in the second set of the *Miracles of St. Demetrios* (ed. P. LEMERLE, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de saint Démétrius* 1, Paris 1979, 227.9).

It is not employed in Theodore of Stoudios's correspondence), and died, having fulfilled his "artistic" role in the narrative (col. 1093C= Auzépy, 107.5-6). The death of the abbot John is interwoven in the story with the death of Stephen's father: both events signify the end of the hero's youth (he is said, however, to have reached the age of thirty-one by that time [col. 1097B= Auzépy, 109.19]). Having lost his physical and spiritual fathers, Stephen climbs the hierarchical ladder of holiness: he succeeded John as *hegoumenos* and moved from glory to glory and from sanctity to sanctity (a series of Old Testament parallels enhance this image of moral and ascetic progress). Although Stephen settled in a small hut on a mountain top, it was not possible to conceal the fact that this was a city on a mountain (col. 1097C= Auzépy, 110.12-13). This phrase from *Matth.* 5.14 was very popular with the hagiographers; here it has an additional connotation, since the monastery of St. Auxentios was located on a mountain; the emperor Constantine contemptuously dubbed it "Auxentios' hill" (col. 1100B= Auzépy, 111.7-8). Stephen tried to flee from his glory, but this led to a paradoxical situation: "The flock was present whereas the shepherd disappeared" (col. 1104A= Auzépy, 113.31-114.1). The flight, however, was not genuine, being a parody of the ancient romance: Stephen returned to his flock, in fetters, which he put on voluntarily, arranging them in the form of the cross (col. 1104C= Auzépy, 114.19-21).

The preliminary (and traditional) part of the biography ends here, and the Deacon stresses its close by repeating the phrase of *Matth.* 5.14 that introduces the transfer of the action from the remote "hill of Auxentios" to the royal city in which Stephen earned the high esteem of pious and Orthodox people. From customary ascetic deeds the hagiographer moves to the political conflict: the dormant theme of Iconoclasm reappears (col. 1113C-1121D= Auzépy, 117.1-128.25), and the tragedy of the saint reaches its culmination, or rather two peaks, which are preceded by the second exordium (col. 1108A-1109B= Auzépy, 117.1-118.27). These two peaks are the stories of the nun Anna and of George Synkletous, and in them the two levels of narration (the saint's biography and Iconoclasm) come together.

The earlier theme of flight is connected only tangentially with the ancient romance — the story of Anna is a "perverse romance". In the *Vita*, sex, food and the Hippodrome are three major sensual pleasures, and all three are rejected by holy men and women. The hagiographer points out that Constantine V celebrated the Brumalia first by singing loudly to the guitar and, then, reclining to drink (col. 1172D= Auzépy, 165.1-4), and he characterizes the behavior of gluttons with such derogatory composita as *λαυμαργικόν* (col. 1148C, 1173D= Auzépy, 148.8, 168.29), *κοιλιόδουλος* (col. 1120A, 1121A= Auzépy, 126.7; 168.7), and *γαστριμαργία* (col. 1089D= Auzépy, 104.16). On the other hand, Stephen was consistently abstinent (see col. 1073BC, 1148A, 1168C= Auzépy, 91.3, 147.17; 163.17-20), and he refused to take the provisions offered him by Iconoclasts (col. 1124C, 1145B= Auzépy, 130.2-3; 146.11-12). Horse races and hunting are defined in the *Vita* as Satanic pleasures (col. 1113A, 1172B= Auzépy, 121.19; 166.14), and sex is treated as evil: the author writes with indignation about the Iconoclastic patriarch Constantine who had three

spouses (col. 1112C= Auzépy, 121.2-3), and calls the third wife of the emperor Constantine V adulterous (*μοιχαλίσ*) (col. 1169C= Auzépy, 165.8), using the term which was heatedly debated at the time of the composition of the *Vita* with respect to the second marriage of Constantine VI (we shall return to this event below, p. 237f.). He applies the biblical expression "stallions mad after mares (*θηλυμανεῖς*, lit. mad after females)" (col. 1128C, 1133C= Auzépy, 133.10; 138.3). Such a profession of chastity is a regular hagiographical trait, but the hagiographer reverses the situation asserting that the Iconoclasts, in turn, accused monks and nuns of lechery. Constantine V sent his servant to the convent at the foot of Mount Auxentios in which, as the emperor put it, harlots (*πόρναι*) dwelt in intimacy with the "unmindful" [monks], while pretending to be pious (col. 1128B= Auzépy, 133.1-2). One of these "unmindful harlots" was Anna, a rich inhabitant of Constantinople.

Anna's episode is artfully prepared. Firstly, "Anna" appears as the name of Stephen's mother. The name is not only her real appellation, but is also used symbolically: although she had two daughters, the hagiographer calls her "the new Anna" (col. 1077D, 1080A= Auzépy, 94.23; cf. 95.1), in deliberate reference to St. Mary's mother, because she wanted to have a son, but could not conceive him for a long while. She is also "the new Anna" since she gave birth to a new Samuel (reference to I *Kings* 1.20), that is, Stephen. The theme of Anna is continued: during his exile Stephen settled near the church of Anna, God's grandmother (col. 1148A= Auzépy, 147.14-15). The descriptions of the two Annas converge: Stephen was connected with the convent of Trichinarea at the foot of the mountain of St. Auxentios: from there he carried water and other things to his monastery higher on the mountain (col. 1092B= Auzépy, 105.5-11). It may be noted that the theme of carrying water had sexual connotations in Byzantine literature: Kallimachos, the protagonist of a thirteenth-century romance, was hired as *μίσθαργος* to carry water and irrigate the garden<sup>9</sup> in which he soon found his beloved Chrysorrhoe. The Deacon finds it necessary to emphasize that while doing his job Stephen was not "molested" by demonical passions (col. 1092B= Auzépy, 105.13). It was here, in Trichinarea, that Stephen placed his mother Anna and his two sisters, and here a pious and rich woman became the nun Anna (col. 1105A-1108A= Auzépy, 115.8-116.31).

The Anna episode proper begins with the story of a calumny: the emperor was informed that the nun was visiting the saint at night and had intercourse with him (col. 1125D = Auzépy, 132.4-7). The Iconoclasts proclaimed Anna Stephen's lover (*φίλη*) (col. 1128D = Auzépy, 133.23), and Constantine V asserted that Stephen intended to fornicate with her (col. 1129B = Auzépy, 134.11-13); later, Anna's treacherous maid (*δολία δουλίσ*) confirmed everything that the emperor desired. Constantine promised to reward Anna if she acknowledged Stephen's adultery and fornication (col. 1132A= Auzépy, 135.12-19). Naturally, she rejected the offer. A punishment followed: Constantine gathered a crowd at Phiale and ordered his men to bring Anna there naked; she was shown a "crowd" (the

<sup>9</sup> *Le roman de Callimaque et de Chrysorrhoe*, ed. M. PICHARD, Paris 1956, vers. 1651-1670.

writer uses the same word *πλῆθος*) of whips and threatened with flogging unless she revealed publicly Stephen's "dirty fornication" with her. Anna remained silent, and the angry emperor called her an adulterer and ordered that she be whipped. Eight men fetched her, hoisted her in the air "in the form of a cross" (*σταυροειδῶς*), and proceeded to beat her (col. 1132B = Auzépy, 136.1-4). The expression "in the form of a cross" is not accidental: it signified the victory of good over evil. After the ordeal, the emperor commanded that Anna be placed in a Constantinopolitan nunnery.

Anna's nakedness is ambivalent. On the one hand, it has a sexual connotation; on the other, it is a symbol of chastity. In general, the hagiographer is not embarrassed to mention the sexual regions of the body: he relates that the Theotokos touched the loins (*ψόα*) of Stephen's mother to make her conceive her saintly son (col. 1076D = Auzépy, 93.3-5), and later he narrates how the tormentors pummeled the saint's loins with rods (*βέγγαι*, a non-classical word, col. 1137D = Auzépy, 141.13).

The story of Anna's loyalty is followed by the story of George's treason. Again, the theme of treason is subtly prepared in the preceding part of the discourse: the *patrikios* Kallistos (whom the hagiographer, playing on words, names *κάκιστος*, "the worst", col. 1124B, 1125B = Auzépy, 121.18; 131.14) corrupted one of the saint's disciples, Sergios by name, "the second Iscariotes", who took money and slandered his teacher (col. 1125CD = Auzépy, 131.21-24). In the episode of George Synkletous the theme of treason is developed to the full.

George, a young and vigorous man (col. 1132D = Auzépy, 136.18-19) —qualities that previous hagiographers commonly applied to saintly persons— was one of Constantine V's courtiers. On a certain occasion Constantine asked him whether he had love (*πόθος*, the word having sexual connotations) for the emperor. George said that his love was vast, beyond all compare. Constantine went further in his interrogation asking George whether he was willing to die for his love (*ἀγάπη*) of the emperor. George pressed both hands to his breast and swore that yes, he was; the emperor responded by embracing (or kissing, *ἀσπασάμενος*) him (col. 1132D = Auzépy, 137.1). Thus the introduction to the George episode —following the story of Anna— is permeated with sexual phraseology, while the story-teller is careful to add that Constantine embraced George "as a father", immediately reminding the reader that George was "the son and servant of lawlessness" (col. 1133A; cf. 1136C = Auzépy, 137.8; cf. 139.18).

The plot was as follows: George came to Stephen and claimed to be an adversary and victim of Iconoclasm, and even showed the wounds on his face inflicted at the command of the "tyrant"; unsuspecting, Stephen believed the man, promptly put the monastic habit on George (col. 1133B-1136A = Auzépy, 137.8-138.27), and fell into the trap that had been prepared for him. Immediately Constantine began to accuse monks of tearing George away from the emperor (lit. "from my thigh", perhaps containing a sexual connotation?) and made him an *abbas*. Soon George fled from the "hill", and the tyrant gladly received him, and kissed (*καταφιλεῖ*) him (col. 1136C = Auzépy, 139.22) —the word again brings us

back to the sexual theme. The tyrant acted fast: he convened a *silention*, at which the throng was so large that people suffocated. George was divested of his monastic habit, and the holy garb, including the cross, was trampled upon; water was poured on George — "annihilating the baptism", as the Deacon asserts— and he stood naked before the crowd (as Anna did some time before) (col. 1137AC = Auzépy, 140.1-141.1). The procedure was completed when George put on military attire, and the emperor personally gave him a sword and appointed him *strator*. The innumerable throng (repeats the hagiographer) went off to demolish Stephen's monastery.

Now the punishment of the innocent comes into play in accordance with the articles of the classic martyrdom: beating, exile and indoctrination by false bishops, which naturally failed. Then follow miracles performed by the martyr: sight is restored to a blind man, a boy possessed by a demon is relieved of his affliction, a bleeding woman is cured, and a storm is calmed —the standard saintly repertoire. Suddenly, the torpid story comes alive: the narrator relates how there was an Armenian (from the theme of Armeniakon?) soldier, also named Stephen, who suffered from a disease of the spine, which had become completely curved (the writer uses the pluperfect *ἐπεκύφει*), and who was cured by the saint (col. 1156AC = Auzépy, 153.18-24). To some extent the story duplicates that of George: Stephen the Armenian also betrayed his benefactor. The two stories differ only to the effect that George atoned before death, whereas the Armenian soldier was punished by heavenly powers: he fell from his horse and died. In the discourse Stephen's case fulfills the same function as that of George, because it also accounts for the renewed persecution directed at the saint: there follows prison, interrogation by the emperor, the prediction of his own demise, and cruel execution —all stock ingredients of the epic *martyria*. The last episode is introduced by the formula designating a new "chapter": "The time summons me to narrate Stephen's death" (col. 1168A = Auzépy, 163.1-5), but compositionally the author returns to *déjà vu*: again the enemies of the Christians informed the emperor about Stephen's improper behavior in jail (throughout the night he sang hymns while the *Dragon* was celebrating the heathen feast of Brumalia —the accusation is strange since it transposes us to the time of pagan persecutions and is not related to the cult of icons); the Iconoclasts demanded the saint's execution, but Constantine hesitated again and sent Stephen to jail. Finally, death, once more foreseen and predicted by the saint, came: the mob dragged the martyr through the streets of Constantinople and slaughtered him.

The biography is supplemented with posthumous miracles ("It is not fair," comments the hagiographer, "to put to silence the saint's posthumous miracles, which God worked in praise and glory of His servant" [col. 1180A = Auzépy, 172.2-4]): both meteorological phenomena and the punishment of two evil persons, a certain Stephanites and the treacherous maid of Anna. The insertion of the story about the horrendous death of the maid into the concluding part of the discourse underlines once more the importance of the Anna episode for the *Vita*.

Thus the composition of the *Vita* is complex. The author consciously and clearly divides the narrative into separate "chapters", marking their inception and/or conclusion

with special formulas. The plot coincides with the fabula and is linear, presenting the life of the saint from his conception to death and only infrequently reverting back to events already covered. The narrative consists of chronologically ordered episodes which reach their peak in two independent stories, the heroes of which (Anna and George) push Stephen temporarily into the background. Stephen the Deacon emphasizes the chronological consistency of his narration: he does not want to erect the roof before laying the foundations of the house (col. 1081B= Auzépy, 97.3-4). He constructs a two-tier narrative and makes the two themes, the biography of an ascetic and the political events of the Iconoclastic dispute, merge together, precisely at the moment of the acme. And in a similar manner the episodes of the “narrated reality” merge together with the elements of the conventional saga of the martyr’s ordeal. Stephen the Deacon is not afraid (or ashamed) to “adorn” his lifelike narrative with formulaic descriptions known by heart by each and every intelligent Byzantine.

### C. Characters, setting and wording

The discourse deals primarily with the conflict of two protagonists: the saint and the tyrant. Stephen and the emperor are contrasted not only morally, but also physically: Stephen is chaste, abstinent, devoted to piety; Constantine, his opponent, has three wives (like his patriarch and namesake), eats much and laughs exceedingly.<sup>10</sup>

The character of St. Stephen is traditional: pious in his childhood (col. 1081C, 1084A= Auzépy, 97.6-28; 98.1), he was a paragon of Christian virtues during his stay in the monastery (col. 1089D= Auzépy, 104.14-105-15); his martyrdom is described according to the standards of the epic passion. The image of the tyrant is more intricate. First of all, there is no clear distinction between two emperors: the originator of Iconoclasm is Leo III, and the Deacon repeatedly plays on his name saying that “the wild beast, named after the lion, roared like a lion” (col. 1084C; cf. 1085B, 1109C= Auzépy, 98.26; cf. 100.6 and 199.9). Constantine V, who is usually described as a dragon (col. 1117C, 1156C, 1169B, 1172C, 1180D= Auzépy, 125.15; 154.21; 155.6; 161.1; 166.28; 173.10) or serpent (col. 1160A= Auzépy, 157.9), is marked, however, by leonine features: he is introduced as the lion’s whelp (col. 1117A= Auzépy, 124.21) and is said also to have roared like a lion (col. 1124C, 1173D= Auzépy, 130.9; 168.26). The Deacon avoids calling him by name, which also contributes to the eradication of the difference between the two Iconoclastic rulers. Narrating the mission of the *patrikios* Kallistos to Stephen, the writer makes the imperial messenger refer to “our pious and Orthodox *basileis* Constantine and Leo” (col. 1124A=

<sup>10</sup> ROUAN, Une lecture, 425-435.

Auzépy, 129.10-11). Leo IV, born in 750 and crowned co-emperor in 751, was a boy at the time of the events, and the mention of his name only serves to reinforce the deliberate confusion. For until this episode the only *basileus* Leo to appear in the story was Leo III “born in Syria”, the enemy of icons who exiled the patriarch Germanos (col. 1109C= Auzépy, 119.11-18). Accordingly, the hagiographer leaves the precise identity of the *basileus* unspecified: it is a vague Leo-Constantine figure who ordered the destruction of the icons and their replacement by Satanic imagery (col. 1113A= Auzépy, 121.19-20). Later, he introduces similar accusations, clearly addressing Constantine (col. 1172A= Auzépy, 166.14). At any rate, there is no clear-cut transition from Leo to Constantine in the *Vita*: the tyrant roaring like a lion is an abstract fiend.

But he is not completely abstract. Strangely enough, Constantine, the anti-hero, the tyrant and dragon, seems more human than the hero of the *Vita*. The Deacon does not pass over in silence the emperor’s expedition against the European Scythians (col. 1125B= Auzépy, 131.19-21) —that is, Bulgarians— which resulted in victory for the Byzantines and was extolled by them in the early ninth century, the same period the *Vita* was produced (we shall return to this issue p. 224-234). Moreover, he presents the tyrant as fatigued by the incessant attacks of the “unmindful” monks. For example, Constantine complained in the Hippodrome that the God-hating swarm of the “unmindful” did not allow him to live normally (col. 1136B= Auzépy, 139.3-4), and on another occasion he exclaimed that he was no more the emperor: “You have another *basileus* at whose feet you roll over and whose tracks you venerate” (col. 1176A= Auzépy, 169.3-6). Constantine did not rush to execute Stephen; several times he postponed the capital punishment under various excuses, and ultimately it was not the emperor but the mob that killed the saint.

More interesting than the protagonists are some minor personages of the *Vita*, the most significant being Anna and George Synkletous. Anna, who is no less a martyr than Stephen, is as shadowy a figure as he is —a paragon of endurance and faithfulness, deprived of femininity despite of her sexually ambiguous role. On the other hand, George, an Iconoclast, is probably the most sympathetic figure among the *dramatis personae* of the discourse: his loyalty to the emperor, his readiness to sacrifice his reputation and his life for the sake of the sovereign incites the audience’s respect even though George acts for the wrong cause. The author makes him atone at the end of the story and finds an eyewitness to testify to this effect, thus granting forgiveness to the young and handsome officer of the tyrant.

George is not the only Iconoclast who deserves the audience’s respect. In Constantine’s milieu there were two brothers whom the Deacon characterizes not only as handsome in appearance, but also “beautiful in soul and quite remarkable”. The emperor dispatched them to beat Stephen, but they abstained from fulfilling his command (col. 1173AB= Auzépy, 167.11-168.7). Constantine of Nikomedeia, one of the ideologues of Iconoclasm, and an enemy of the saint, is also depicted as youth fully blooming in body and mind (col. 1141B= Auzépy, 143.19-21). A jailer, *kapiklarios*, revered the captive Stephen,

and said to his wife in secret: "We shall all perish on account of the madness of the tyrant." His wife not only waited on Stephen, but confessed to him that she had three icons hidden in her possession (col. 1161A-1164A= Auzépy, 158.15-159.31).

Certainly, not all Iconoclasts receive positive treatment in the *Vita*. One of the closest collaborators of Constantine V is Lachanodrakon, *archon* of Asia, who tortured Iconophiles and in particular, thirty-eight monks (col. 1165A= Auzépy, 161.7-27). The Deacon compiles a list of victims of the Iconoclastic persecutions: Theosteriktos of Pelekete, whose nose was cut off and beard smeared with resin and oil (col. 1164D= Auzépy, 161.2-5); Peter of Blachernae who was whipped because he had courageously called Constantine offender of the faith (col. 1165CD= Auzépy, 162.10-15); John, *hegoumenos* of Monagrias, whom the Iconoclasts drowned in the sea (col. 1165D= Auzépy, 162.15-19). But these men are symbols rather than real persons, unlike a certain Stephanites who was a little boy when he attended Stephen's burial (col. 1180C= Auzépy, 173.5). The novelette about Stephanites presents graphic characterization and the play of vulgar emotions.

From his childhood Stephanites dwelt in an Orthodox monastic milieu. As he grew up, he asked the *hegoumenos* of the monastery of Dios to ordain him deacon. The ordination was, however, postponed because the *hegoumenos* considered Stephanites too young for the office. The young man was disgruntled and plotted revenge: he stole the casket (*λαρνακίδιον*) with the relics of St. Stephen, brought it to the imperial palace, revealed the story (*δοῦμα*) of the saint's funeral and accused the *hegoumenos* of criminal activities (col. 1181A= Auzépy, 173.17-27). The tyrant ordered that the *hegoumenos* be arrested and that another participant of the funeral, Theodore, who had been exiled to Sicily, be recalled; the accused denied any wrongdoing and, lo and behold, the *larnakidion* vanished to prove that both men were guiltless. Unexpectedly, the (Iconoclastic) emperor responded justly: he commanded Stephanites to be flogged and banished him, and at the same time liberated "the venerable men" (col. 1181BC= Auzépy, 173.28-174.24).

In some cases the personalities of the *Vita* are not just mentioned or named, but their deportment is described, their gestures are depicted and even their actions are given psychological justification. We have seen the exchange of gestures between Constantine and George, and this is not the only scene of this kind. As Constantine listened to Anna's courageous answer he became speechless; he bit his thumb (*ἀκροδάκτυλον*, a rare word), his left hand described a circle in the air, he hissed (*συριεῖς* —he was, after all, a "Dragon"), sat down with a frown, and remained with mouth agape (col. 1129C= Auzépy, 134.23-25). In another passage, Constantine's gestures are depicted in almost the same words: he shifted his blood-red eyes in a wild manner, his hand described a circle in the air, he hissed like a dragon and spoke arrogantly (col. 1157A= Auzépy, 155.8-10). Gesticulation, although vividly depicted, is associated with the actions of Iconoclasts, as are also scenes of commotion. Constantine's agents entered a nunnery "like stallions mad after mares", alarmed the virgins, unsheathed their swords and brandished them in the air; in the din of commotion the service stopped and the holy women wept. One of them crossed the

chancel screen and entered the sanctuary, another moved aside the sacred veil and hid beneath the holy table, a nun headed toward the mountain, escaping the hands of the impious (col. 1128C= Auzépy, 133.9-16). In order to create the atmosphere of commotion the Deacon fills the paragraph with verbs and participles, especially those signifying movement: *εἰσπηδήσαντες, περιστρέφοντες, προσέφυγεν, ἐκρύπτετο, ἔφευγε*. Another scene of commotion takes place in a vestibule of the palace: the tyrant "leapt into" the vestibule and met there courtiers hurrying to breakfast (col. 1173D= Auzépy, 168.25-29). He asked in frustration why nobody would rid him of Stephen. Forthwith he could see "commotion and the foolishness of the crowd (*ὀχλαγωγία*);" the men ran to the Praetorium, burst into the prison, shouted murderously, rushed upon Stephen and dragged him out (col. 1176AB= Auzépy, 169.9-19). In contrast, Stephen, being dragged, is described by static rather than dynamic verbs and participles: he leaned upon (*ἀντανάκλασας*) the earth, lifted his head a little (*ὕποκουφίσας*), directed his eyes to heaven and worshipped Theodore the Martyr (col. 1176C= Auzépy, 169.21-25).

Close to gesture in its artistic function is the physical appearance of the characters in the tale, and again this is something we find applied to Iconoclasts. When George Synkletous was introduced to the saint, Stephen understood immediately that he was close to the emperor from his dress and his countenance, but above all from his shaven beard: in conformity with the tyrant's order, George has shaved close to the skin (col. 1133B= Auzépy, 137.21-24). The author comments: God said to Moses "You shall not shave the edge of your beard" (*Levit.* 19.27), but the new Amalekite commanded old and young alike to shave their beards in order to appear robust like "stallions mad for mares" (col. 1133C= Auzépy, 137.24-138.3). All the elements of "naturalistic" description (gesture, commotion, appearance) lead, in this *Vita*, in the last analysis to the world of sexuality. The chaste world of the saint, on the other hand, is fixed, unchanging, motionless. Psychological motivation is rare in the *Vita*. It is employed on one occasion for a situation that aroused considerable debate in the ninth century: should the Orthodox willingly undergo martyrdom or was it acceptable to flee the persecution? The Deacon raises this question referring to Stephen's advice to his monks to seek refuge in one of three regions safe from Iconoclasm: the northern shore of the Black Sea, Italy, and Cyprus together with the nearby coasts of Asia Minor and Palestine (col. 1117CD= Auzépy, 125.17-25). The hagiographer goes on to explain that the monks fled not because they were afraid to endure martyrdom, but because they were afraid of the tyrant's knavery and their own lack of experience (*ἀπειραστον*). What is not experienced, ponders the writer, is not proved (*οὐ δόκιμον*), and in order to be proved the object should be tested (*βασανισθέν*) like gold in the furnace (col. 1120B= Auzépy, 126.14-18).

Unlike gesture and related elements of personal characterization attached primarily to the negative characters, the setting depicted in the *Vita* is principally that of the hermitic dwelling. Even though the main events of Stephen's biography take place in Constantinople, there is no description of the city in the *Vita*, unless we include the Iconoclastic artistic program, which has, in fact, an ideological and not a descriptive



function. Constantinople is an object of narration not description. The description of a setting is linked first of all to monastic hermitages. When Mount Auxentios appears in the very beginning of the text (col. 1088BC= Auzépy, 102.1-24) the author begins by locating, very precisely, the place near the "Gulf" (κόλπος) of Nikomedeia, in Bithynia. He then states that the site is delightful for those who have embarked on the quest for salvation. Afterwards comes the description proper: the mountain is higher than the surrounding hills, it is cold and dry, and reaches up to the sky. This short, sober, "naturalistic" characterization is supplemented by a list of metonymies: it may be named, continues the hagiographer, the mountain of God, Choreb, Carmel, Sinai, Tabor, Lebanon or the Holy City (i.e. Jerusalem). More "naturalistic" is the description of the top of the mountain, where Stephen settled in a cave: rocks were piled up, a narrow precipitous ravine led there, and stormy winds ravaged the place (col. 1101A= Auzépy, 112.23-113.6). George, on his way to the monastery of St. Stephen, spent a night in a deserted grove, which offered firewood, and at dawn he left the thicket (col. 1133A= Auzépy, 137.10-12). When Stephen was exiled to the Prokonnesos, he found there a precipitous place near the sea and settled in an awesome, cave-like dwelling, that is characterized as "extremely delightful and marvelous" (col. 1145D, 1148A= Auzépy, 147.8-13), evidently from a soteriological viewpoint.

Besides direct characteristics, Stephen the Deacon often uses what we may call "alien speech", renderings ascribed to characters of the story which serve to support or contradict the author's position. The hagiographer says, for instance, that jailers considered Stephen an earthly angel (col. 1161A= Auzépy, 158.15), while on the other hand he declares that Constantine V called Stephen a sorcerer (col. 1129B= Auzépy, 134.11), a view the hagiographer certainly did not share. A complex case of off-center discourse is the episode where the saint is put in jail —the punishment applied to him by law (ἐννόμως) for his lawless (ἀνόμως) trampling of the imperial effigy on a coin (col. 1160B= Auzépy, 157.12-13). Despite the rhetorical paronomasia the words are obviously not the writer's, who immediately withdraws from them exclaiming: "What madness!"

Although grammatically speaking the *Vita* can be considered a work belonging to a "high style" (if, among other things, we use the pluperfect as a mark of high style), it is not highly rhetorical. As usual Biblical parallels are copious, and they serve often to elevate the narrative: Stephen's parents are said to have been guided by an angel, like Joseph and Mary (col. 1088AB= Auzépy, 101.21-22), and when the hagiographer conveys that Stephen tried to imitate St. Auxentios he calls his hero "the new Elisha" (col. 1101C= Auzépy, 113.12) referring to the scene of III *Kings* 19.19-21, where Elisha is presented as Elias' disciple. Eulogizing "the sage John", whom even quadrupeds addressed by name, the writer states that saintly persons were able to subjugate not just wild animals but the elements themselves, and refers to the Three Hebrews who survived the flame of the furnace, to Moses, Jesus, Elias and Elisha who commanded the water, and to Daniel and Jonah who made beasts serve them (col. 1092C= Auzépy, 105.22-24). It is noteworthy that many instances of this supernatural power granted to Christ and the saints belong to the favorite

topics of hymnography, namely the "prefigurations" of the Ancient Testament (the Three Hebrews, Moses crossing the Red Sea, Jonah in the Whale). Numerous similes follow hagiographical standards: the cloud covering the sun (col. 1072C= Auzépy, 89.17-18), the industrious bee (col. 1072D, 1097B= Auzépy, 90.3; 109.23), the sea of life and the harbor (col. 1076B= Auzépy, 92.16-17), dogs (col. 1084B, 1148B, 1173C= Auzépy, 98.20; 148.5; 168.18; 170.2), the fish taking a bait (col. 1104A= Auzépy, 114.6), wild beasts (col. 1160A, 1176B= Auzépy, 157.6; 169.11), sheep (col. 1109A, 1148A, 1176B= Auzépy, 147.21; 169.15), the deaf asps (col. 1185A= Auzépy, 176.27-177.1) and so on, some depending directly on biblical sayings. Rhetorical figures are predominantly synonyms. Unlike the *Martyrion of the Sabaites*, they are seldom identical (θρηνώδες καὶ γοερόν, col. 1133B= Auzépy, 137.18), but usually loaded with different nuances (τιμώριζε τοῦτον, σφάττε καὶ καῖε πυρί, col. 1137A= Auzépy, 140.9-10; ἀποστάτης, ἀμνημόνευτος καὶ σκοτένδυτος, col. 1140A= Auzépy, 141.19), or they are built on paronomasia, such as "the lawless emperor's yet more lawless servant" (παρὰ νόμου βασιλέως παρὰ νομώτερος οἰκέτης, col. 1128B= Auzépy, 133.6); Leo III, darkened (ἐσκοτισμένος) in his soul, is said to have called monk's habit the garb of darkness (σκοτίας σχῆμα, col. 1112A= Auzépy 120.2). In the same category belongs the name given by Damaskenos to the Iconoclastic bishops (ἐπίσκοποι): "darkeners" (ἐπίσκοτοι, col. 1120A, 1140B= Auzépy, 126.7; 127.16; 142.6). Stephen employs rhetorical questions, duplications, isokola including *chairetismos* (col. 1080A= Auzépy, 95.5-8) and *makarismos* (col. 1089B= Auzépy, 103.16-24), but these figures are rarely elaborate. An interesting exception is the scene of the healing of a blind man: while Stephen's speech here is plain in syntax and vocabulary ("Keep faith," he said, "worship the icons of Christ, His Mother and saints, believe in the twenty servants of God," and so on), the crippled man entreats him rhythmically and rhetorically:

ἰδὼν μου τὴν κάκωσιν, παράσχου τὴν ἴασιν,

μετρήσας μου τὴν πίστιν, δίδου τὴν χάριν,

ζυγοστατήσας μου τὸν πόθον, θεράπευσον τὸν πόνον (col. 1149D-1152A= Auzépy, 150.11-13).

He continues with the figure of gradatio: "I believe, my lord, and believing I approach and worship," and after the cure, he departs, says the hagiographer using pleonastic expressions, "rejoicing and gay, praising and glorifying God" (col. 1152AB= Auzépy, 150.18-19 and 150.26-151.1).

At the same time Stephen the Deacon has not taste enough to avoid trifle puns, such as onomatopoeia (Stephen and στέφανος, "crown", Kallistos and κάκιστος), or obvious puns on words, such as "leader of a faction" —φατριάρχης— rather than patriarch.<sup>11</sup> He enjoys rare composita such as πτωχόνοια (poverty of intellect, col. 1072B= Auzépy, 89.2;

<sup>11</sup> The word appears also in a *Vita of Theophanes the Confessor* (Theoph. 2, 9.25-26), and in pseudo-Damaskenos (PG 95, 332B), but it is not used by Theophanes.



152.27),<sup>12</sup> στεννονομία (narrowness, col. 1101A= Auzépy, 112.21; 141.23), στερονοπυγή (beating the breast, col. 1104B= Auzépy, 114.3), σαρκόμορφος or σαρκομοιόμορφος (in flesh, col. 1116A= Auzépy 123.8; 160.20; 164.15) and many others, not always registered in Lampe.

#### D. The continuators

The first anti-Iconoclastic Constantinopolitan *Vita*, the biography of Stephen the Younger became the model for a series of hagiographical texts of the ninth century and later that eulogized the ideological resistance to the Iconoclastic "tyrants". In this category the following biographies of saintly heroes belong:

1. Anonymous, *Vita of Nikephoros of Medikion* (d. 813). This *Vita* is highly rhetorical, abundant in artificial words and long speeches, but poor in information.<sup>13</sup> It was compiled after 824 (since it mentions the death of Niketas of Medikion) and, probably, before 845, according to W. Treadgold.<sup>14</sup> Nikephoros was born to a Constantinopolitan family that his hagiographer characterizes as "not ignoble and well-off". He participated in the Council of Nicaea in 787 summoned to restore the veneration of icons, but died before Iconoclasm resumed in 815; he was not a victim of Iconoclastic persecutions.

2. *Vita of Niketas of Medikion* by the monk Theosteriktos. Niketas of Medikion (d. 824) was Nikephoros' disciple and successor. His *Vita* was produced probably between 824 and 829.<sup>15</sup> Niketas yielded to the Iconoclastic persecutions, organized by Leo V Armenian in 815, and rejected, although temporarily, icon veneration. Later he repented his weakness, renounced Iconoclasm, and was exiled to the island of St. Glykeria, near the capital. He was released by Michael II in 820.

E. von Dobschütz suggested that Theosteriktos had been Niketas' pupil and that the *Vita* he wrote was revised in the Stoudios monastery in order to silence the conflict

<sup>12</sup> The word is not registered in Lampe, see however Germanos, PG 98, 340C and John the Monk's *Enkomion of Nicholas of Myra*, PG 96, 1385A.

<sup>13</sup> BHG 2297-2298; ed. F. HALKIN, La vie de s. Nicéphore, fondateur de Médikion en Bithynie (d. 813), AB 78, 1960, 396-430.

<sup>14</sup> W. TREADGOLD, The Bulgars' Treaty with the Byzantines in 816, RSBS 4, 1984, 213-220.

<sup>15</sup> BHG 1341-1342b; ed. AASS Apr. I, XVIII-XXVII. On the date, see ALEXANDER, *Patr. Nicephorus*, 126 n. 2: Theosteriktos mentions the emperor Michael II (d. 829) as still alive.

between Niketas and the militant Iconophile Theodore of Stoudios.<sup>16</sup> The *Vita* omits the moment of its hero's weakness.

Although Niketas was from Bithynian Caesarea, the capital is in the fore of the events described in the *Vita*. Theosteriktos speaks of emperors and patriarchs. Leo III is presented as a usurper who caused confusion in all churches (p. XXIII, par. 28). To characterize Constantine V the hagiographer uses expressions similar to wordings of Stephen the Deacon: "the most evil scion from an evil root," the soul-destroying dragon, the descendant of the venomous beast, the leopard of many wiles (ποικιλότροπος, a post-classical word: like ποικίλος [cf. *Iliad*. 10.30], it could mean "dappled" and thus be fittingly applied to a leopard, but in patristic vocabulary it acquired a pejorative sense, as a definition of the snares of the Devil [pseudo-Prokopios of Gaza, PG 87, 1269B]), the [cub] of the horrible lion (AASS Apr. I, XXIV, par. 28). The author calls Leo V tyrant, but praises the Iconophiles Irene, Nikephoros I and Michael I.

Theosteriktos names numerous officials but seldom describes their functions. To this group belong Athanasios, the co-founder of the Medikion monastery, a scribe of public documents in the so-called *logothesion* (p. XX, par. 11), and Zacharias who administered state affairs in Thrace and was the supervisor of the imperial estates of Mangana (p. XXVIf., par. 43-45). The *Vita* contains some fascinating, although legendary details concerning Iconoclastic ideology, for instance the notorious simile allegedly coined by the emperor Constantine V likening the Virgin, after she had given birth to Jesus, to an empty bag (AASS Apr. I, XXIV, par. 28).

Another *Vita of Niketas* was authored by the otherwise unknown John Hagioelites;<sup>17</sup> the date of its compilation is unknown.

3. The anonymous *Vita of John of Gotthia* (d. ca. 792-800). This *Vita* survived in two versions: the long redaction is known from a manuscript of the sixteenth century, the short one is extant in a tenth-century manuscript. It was written, according to Ševčenko, between 815 and 842,<sup>18</sup> for the hagiographer presents the Iconoclasts as the dominant party. John is known as a signatory of the Council of Nicaea in 787. The hagiographer calls him the grandson of an officer in the theme of Armeniakon; he was born in the *emporion* of the Parthenitai in the Crimea, and after traveling to Palestine and Constantinople returned

<sup>16</sup> E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, Methodios und die Studiten, BZ 18, 1909, 81-83.

<sup>17</sup> T. E. EUANGELIDES, *Oi βίοι τῶν ἁγίων*, Athens 1895, 286-313.

<sup>18</sup> BHG 891-891b. Editions: AASS June VII, 167-171; A. NIKITSKIJ, Žitie prep. otca našego Ioanna episkopa Gotfii (751-755), *Zapiski Odesskogo obščestva istorii i drevnostej* 13, 1883, 25-34; F. HALKIN, Le synaxaire grec de Christ Church à Oxford, AB 66, 1948, 80-83. The main study by V. G. VASIL'EVSKIJ, Žitie Ioanna Gotskogo, *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveščeniia* 195, 1878, repr. in ID., *Trudy* 2, St. Petersburg 1909, 351-427; cf. G. L. HUXLEY, On the Vita of St. John of Gotthia, GRBS 19, 1978, 161-169 and ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 4f and 30.

home and was elected bishop of Gotthia (Crimea). The *Vita* describes his struggle against Iconoclasm, but John was not a martyr.

4. The anonymous *Vita of Niketas patrikios* (d. 836).<sup>19</sup> The writer had no personal recollections about the saint but used the notes prepared by the saint's nephew also named Niketas. The *Vita* preserves numerous names of the saint's contemporaries and of the places where he lived. The hagiographer describes three posthumous miracles worked by the saint which presupposes some period of time between 836 and the production of the *Vita*. It can be considered a work of the mid-ninth century.

Niketas was a relative of the empress Irene, although he originated not from the area of Athens but Paphlagonia. His parents castrated him (the production of eunuchs was typical of Paphlagonia) and sent him to the court of Irene, who appointed him *patrikios* and eventually dispatched him as *strategos* of Sicily (the beginning of the *Vita* is lost, and information concerning Niketas' secular career is provided by brief synaxaria entries). Treadgold identified him as Niketas Monomachos and tentatively made him commander of the fleet and *logothete* under Nikephoros I,<sup>20</sup> but there is no evidence of this in the available sources. Niketas retired to the monastery of Chrysonike in Constantinople under Michael I; he had to flee thence during the Second Iconoclasm, but was never arrested or exiled; he died peacefully in a monastery on the southern shore of the Black Sea.

5. The anonymous *Vita of three brothers from Mytilene* (Lesbos) *David, Symeon, and George*.<sup>21</sup> The *Vita* sounds historical, mentioning emperors from Constantine V through Michael III, as well as contemporary patriarchs, and describing Iconoclastic persecutions, Arab raids, and the rebellion of Thomas [the Slav] that started while "the tyrant Leo [V]" was still alive (p. 231.23-24). To what extent the heroes of the *Vita* are truly "historical" is difficult to judge. The saintly brothers are said to have lived in the eighth and the first half of the ninth century; the precise dates of birth suggested by I. Van den Gheyn are questionable (according to him, David was born in 716, Symeon in 764, and George in 763; but a gap of nearly fifty years between the elder and the younger brother is hardly likely).

6. The anonymous *Vita of George of Lesbos*.<sup>22</sup> The problem of the brothers' historicity is further aggravated by the existence of this separate *Vita* of a George who seems to have

<sup>19</sup> BHG 1342b; ed. D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, *Un confesseur du second Iconoclisme: la vie du patrice Nicetas* († 836), *TM* 3, 1968, 309-351.

<sup>20</sup> W. TREADGOLD, *The Byzantine Revival 780-842*, Stanford California 1988, 403 n. 142.

<sup>21</sup> BHG 494; ed. I. VAN DEN GHEYEN, *Acta graeca ss. Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii Mytilenae in insula Lesbo*, *AB* 18, 1899, 209-259; I. PHOUNTIOULES, *Οἱ ὅσοι αὐτάδελφοι Δαβὶδ, Συμεὼν καὶ Γεώργιος οἱ ὁμολογηταί*, *Lesbiakon heortologion* 3, 1961, 17-54.

<sup>22</sup> BHG 2163; ed. I. PHOUNTIOULES, *Οἱ ἄγιοι Γεώργιοι, ἀρχιεπίσκοποι Μυτιλήνης*, *Lesbiakon heortologion* 1, Athens 1959, 33-43.

lived ca. 776-821. Some scholars have tried to distinguish between the Georges, most consistently I. Phountoules who postulated the existence of three Georges: one in the eighth century, one in the beginning of the ninth century, and one in the mid-ninth century. F. Halkin, on the other hand, insisted that there was only one George, bishop of Mytilene, and explained the chronological discrepancy by the late origin of the *Vita* of the three brothers.<sup>23</sup>

The relation between the *Vita of three brothers* and the *Vita of George* remains enigmatic: the *Vita* of the three brothers was most probably the work of a local hagiographer, a sympathizer of Caesar Bardas (whom he praises), a person close to the circle of Ioannikios (on him cf. below, p. 329-342) —the hagiographer mentions both Ioannikios and his ally Niketas of Medikion. The eulogist of George worked (after Bardas' fall in 865?) in Constantinople and had at his disposal no data on local events in Lesbos except for the *translatio* of George's relics under the patriarch Methodios. On the other hand, the *Vita* of the three brothers could possibly have been produced, contrary to the opinion of Halkin, between 863 and 865.<sup>24</sup> The compiler of the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*, however, ignored it and included only the entry on George of Mytilene, a fighter against Iconoclasm.

Whatever the solution, the *Vita* of the three brothers is "realistic" and rich in detail, especially concerning the country life on Lesbos where its main events took place. We are told how nine-year-old David pastured flocks and during a downpour gathered his sheep under a huge tree (p. 214.10-14), or how George ordered his donkey to stop braying lest it disturb a sick dignitary whom he was visiting (p. 242.18-28), or how the inhabitants of Smyrna sent to Lesbos a boat loaded with wheat and beans, as well as a hundred golden coins with which Symeon bought a field (p. 225.15-35). Such events of daily life are interwoven in the *Vita* with miraculous visions: St. Antony appeared to the monks enjoining them to purchase the field, and Symeon observed the same St. Antony walking on the sea (p. 243.15-16); George and Symeon saw an enormous eagle and St. Prokopios with a sword in his hands (p. 221.27-21); and often angels and supernatural beings visited various people in their dreams.

What makes the *Vita* unique is the extreme reverence of the author for family values. There were seven siblings in the family of the heroes, and only two of them remained in the secular world, whereas David, Symeon, George and two others dedicated themselves to God (p. 212.29-213.1). The hagiographer describes how Hilaria, a sister of the saints, dwelt as a recluse in a cell at the church of John the Theologian; Symeon tonsured her and George supervised her (p. 223.16-20). The family ties were highly respected: when the mother of the saints came to visit David in his monastery, he was informed ahead of time

<sup>23</sup> F. HALKIN, *Y a-t-il trois saints Georges, évêques de Mytilène et «confesseurs» sous les iconoclastes?*, *AB* 77, 1959, 464-469.

<sup>24</sup> A. KAZHDAN, *Hagiographical Notes*, *Byzantion* 54, 1984, 185-188.

by divine power, and so he sent a disciple to meet her at the sea shore (p. 218.5-11). Even death did not sever these links: Symeon and George were buried in the same monastery of the Theotokos, and eventually the corpse of David was brought to Lesbos and deposited in the casket of his brothers. The hagiographer concludes this story of his reburial by formulating the principle of strong kinship: "The single miraculous (θαυματόβουτος, a neologism?) grave received those whom the single blessed womb brought into the world" (p. 255.8-10).

Although the hagiographer attacks Iconoclastic emperors (Leo V, Michael II and Theophilos) and the patriarch Theodotos, and deplores the fate of punished Iconophiles (the patriarch Nikephoros, Euthymios of Sardis, Theophanes the Confessor), the theme of Iconoclasm is treated in the *Vita* primarily on the local level. We are told that a cross that was fixed over the altar table in the church of St. Theodora on Lesbos fell down with a great noise, and St. Symeon saw in this an omen predicting an impious reign that should destroy the comeliness of the shrine and particularly its icons (p. 226.20-23). The rush of a pig with bobbed ears and tail into a sanctuary is followed by, and serves as an omen of, the entrance of a usurper named after the beast (p. 227.3), that is Leo V, as well as of the visit to Lesbos of a hierarch named after the beast; soon George, the Orthodox metropolitan of the island, was banished to Cherson (1.8-9). The Iconoclastic bishop of Lesbos persecuted the monks and, among other things, sold their property (p. 241.28-31).

The tale of a pig with bobbed ears and tail, which belonged to an inhabitant of Mytilene and which insolently entered a sanctuary, reappears in a *Narration* about the miracles worked by Christ's icon, dated by von Dobschütz to the eleventh or twelfth centuries.<sup>25</sup> The anonymous author of this short text could have borrowed it from the *Vita* of the three brothers or, perhaps, could have relied upon an independant (oral?) transmission of a local legend.

7. The *Vita of Theophylaktos of Nikomedeia* by Theophylaktos' otherwise unknown namesake.<sup>26</sup> Apart from general words concerning the Iconoclastic conflict and the foundation of the hospital of Kosmas and Damianos in Nikomedeia, this *Vita* is poor in information. The saint's traditional date of death is ca. 840, but we have to note that the hagiographer relates the murder of "the tyrant named after the beast" (Leo V, killed in 820) after the demise of Theophylaktos. The reigns of Michael II and Theophilos are omitted (which would be unusual had Theophylaktos actually died ca. 840), and from Leo V the writer jumps to the empress Theodora and the patriarch Methodios under whose auspices the body of the saint was transferred from exile to Nikomedeia.

<sup>25</sup> DOBSHÜTZ, *Christusbilder*, 255\*\*.

<sup>26</sup> BHG 2451, ed. A. VOGT, S. Théophylacte de Nicomédie, *AB* 50, 1932, 67-82. Another *vita* survived in cod. Patm. 736 of the fourteenth century, but F. HALKIN, its editor (*Hagiologie byzantine*, Brussels 1986 [SHag 71], 170-184), considers the text pre-Metaphrastic and dates it to the ninth century.

If we take into account the fact that the term *mystographos* applied in the *Vita* to the patriarch Tarasios (p. 72, par. 2.4-5) is relatively late,<sup>27</sup> we may hypothesize that the hagiographer was working in the tenth century or later; however, such a hypothesis is difficult to prove.

8. The anonymous *Vita of Andrew "in Tribunal"*.<sup>28</sup> Andrew was a victim of the Iconoclastic persecutions. It is usually accepted that he died in 767, and he is sometimes identified as Andrew Kalybites, whose execution under Constantine V is described by Theophanes. The identification is based only on the identity of names, whereas the mode of execution differs radically; moreover, the description of Andrew's ordeal and death in the *Vita* resembles the end of Stephen the Younger. I. Ševčenko doubts the very existence of Andrew.<sup>29</sup> The anonymous *Vita* is poor in information. It was most probably a work of the end of the ninth century; thereafter it was revised and included in the Metaphrastic collection.

We may supplement this list of the works on saintly champions of the cult of icons with the *Vitae* of several writers (Theophanes the Confessor, Theodore of Stoudios, the brothers Graptoi, the patriarch Methodios) that shall be analyzed separately. We shall also discuss separately the *Vitae* of Tarasios and Nikephoros, produced by Ignatios the Deacon, the *Vita* of Euthymios of Sardis by Methodios, and the *Vitae* of St. Ioannikios and the monks of his circle. We may add to this group the biographical pastiches of two empresses, Irene and Theodora, who were instrumental in the restoration of icon worship. To conclude, it need only be repeated that the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* had an enormous influence on the development of ninth-century hagiography.

<sup>27</sup> The first mention of the term is in an inscription from Attaleia of 911/2: H. GRÉGOIRE, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes*, Paris 1922, no. 302.13; cf. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 325. In the entry on Theophylaktos in the *SynaxCP* (col. 519-522) Tarasios is represented as *protasekretis*.

<sup>28</sup> BHG 111-112; ed. AASS Oct. VIII, 124-149 and PG 115, 1109-1128.

<sup>29</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 2 and 23.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE MONASTIC WORLD CHRONICLE: THEOPHANES THE CONFESSOR

One of the most interesting aspects of literary development ca. 800 is the sudden revival of historical writing. After a hundred-year barren period, the Byzantines turned to their past, and several works appeared almost simultaneously, the greatest of which is the *Chronographia* of Theophanes, usually dubbed *Homologetes* or (in Latin) *Confessor*. In the words of I. Ševčenko, the *Chronographia* comprises “the jewel of middle Byzantine historiography”.<sup>1</sup> Just as Shakespeare in the Elizabethan period was surrounded by a constellation of playwrights, so, too, Theophanes worked in a milieu of minor historians (or chronographers —we shall use the words as synonyms), whether his predecessors, contemporaries or successors. It was he, however, who was to have the greatest influence on subsequent historiography. Constantine VII (or one of his courtiers), in the book *On the Administration of the Empire*, referred several times to the *Chronicle* (or history) of Theophanes (although we do not know whether he used it in the complete or abbreviated version),<sup>2</sup> and at the court of Constantine VII an anonymous continuation of Theophanes was produced. At the end of the eleventh century, John Skylitzes considered Theophanes a paragon of historical writing and claimed that those after him who had ventured on a similar project either lacked his precision or simply limited themselves to reciting the list of emperors in chronological order (Skyl., p. 3.16-23). Whether we agree with this view or not, Skylitzes, in his high esteem of Theophanes, expressed an opinion typical of the average Byzantine reader.

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<sup>1</sup> I. ŠEVČENKO, The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800, *DOP* 46, 1992, 287.

<sup>2</sup> P. YANNOPOULOS, Théophane abrégé au Xe siècle, *Byzantina* 15, 1989, 307-314.

### A. Predecessors and contemporaries

In the preamble to his historical work, Skylitzes names one more chronicler whom he values highly: George, monk and *synkellos* of the patriarch Tarasios (784-806). Besides this short note, not much is known about George's life and career. He probably spent some time in Palestine<sup>3</sup> before accepting the position at the patriarchate of Constantinople, but how long he stayed there and which functions he carried out, we do not know.

The *Select Chronography*,<sup>4</sup> which covers the period from the Creation to Diocletian (284) and was completed in 808-810, is not a literary work in the proper sense of the word. Rather, it belongs to what we may call scientific prose. Its main goals are two: to establish correct chronological order (for which purpose he had to reach agreement between Biblical events and the events of Egyptian, Persian, Greek and Roman history), and to refute the erroneous calculations of his predecessors,<sup>5</sup> or as he puts it, to distinguish truth from falsity (p. 17.26-27, and many other instances). Time itself is perceived as a mystical material power, and George believes that it is not accidental that the most important events in universal history (Creation of the world, Annunciation, Resurrection: p. 1.11-20) occurred on March 25, and he is obsessed by the "relativity of calendars". Different peoples, he notes, have different months (p. 6.16-17), and he "scientifically" synchronizes various eras basing his calculations on a variety of calendars.<sup>6</sup>

George refers to numerous writers whom he claims to have used as sources ("He read many chronographies and histories," Theophanes says of him, "and he examined them critically"); he inserts long passages from these works into his presentation of events; some of these historians he praised, others he upbraided, and to the latter category belong not only pagans like Berossos and Manethon, who contradict the Bible, but also some Christian authors, such as Julius Africanus and Eusebios of Caesarea.

A contemporary of the Iconoclastic crisis and *synkellos* of the Iconodule patriarch Tarasios, George seems to have been unenthusiastic about the debate concerning icon worship. He knows that the image of Christ "not-made-by-hand" was sent to cure Abgar, king of Edessa, but, interestingly, George defines this image as a *χαρακτήρ* (p. 399.20-21,

<sup>3</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *The Search*, 289 n. 29 (following R. LAQUEUR, *RE*, 2. Reihe 4, 1932, 1389f.), rejects the doubts expressed by V. GRECU, *Hat Georgios Synkellos weite Reise übernommen?*, *Bull. de l'Acad. Roum. Sect. hist.* 28/2, 1947, 241-245 (the view accepted, among others, by HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 331f.).

<sup>4</sup> *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga chronographica*, ed. A. MOSHAMMER, Leipzig 1984, 1.3-5 and 360.1-3.

<sup>5</sup> On George's criticism of his predecessors see W. ADLER, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and its Sources in Christian Chronography*, Washington 1989, 132-158. Cf. G. L. HUXLEY, *On the Erudition of George the Synkellos*, *Proceedings of the R. Irish Academy* 81, 1981, C. 6, 207-217.

<sup>6</sup> See for instance J. TUBACH, *Synkellos' Kalender der Hebräer, Vigiliae Christianae* 47, 1993, 379-389.

400.2-3), not as an icon. The term "icon" emerges in a different, heathen context: the emperor Gaius [Caligula] defiled synagogues by setting there his "icons", statues and altars (p. 402.16-17, 20); in the shrine of Bel there were "icons" of zoomorphic beings (p. 30.4), and again George speaks of the idolatrous (*εἰδωλομανεστία*) and insubstantial substances (an oxymoron rare in his work) in the shrine of Bel which Alexander Polyhistor calls "icons" (p. 32.20-22). On the other hand, George is interested in the cross as the sign of victory: like Kosmas the Melode, he stressed that Moses had divided the waters of the Red Sea by using the sign of cross (p. 149.9). Yet there is no cross either in the Biblical passage (*Exod.* 14.27) or in the *Paschal Chronicle* (p. 142.10-11), George's immediate predecessor.

The style of presentation is concise and plain, avoiding epithets and other figures of speech. Typical phrase construction is based on nouns and verbs/participles, as for instance, "Athenians began to revolt [but], having been punished, stopped" (p. 385.24). "Pompeius," narrates George, "having taken Jerusalem by siege, arrested Aristoboulos, together with his sons Alexander and Antigonos; and then set off for Rome where he celebrated a triumph over kings and chieftains of other tribes" (p. 360.10-12). This is the general style of the book (leaving aside the *kanones*, or concise chronological tables); even such a dramatic event as the murder of Julius Caesar is presented in few words (p. 366.3-6). The characteristics of the historical figures are meager: in describing the emperor Aelius Antoninus (Heliogabalus), George says only that he was effeminate and murderous (p. 437.13-14). Not much is said about Alexander the Macedon save his genealogy (p. 315.21-318.6), and even the dramatic scene of Christ's execution and resurrection (p. 388.22-389.14) is described in language virtually bereft of epithets.

Some Biblical and apocryphal tales are touched upon, but without apparent concern to exploit the elements of entertainment contained in them. Thus, following Josephus Flavius, George tells how the Pharaoh's daughter found the infant Moses, and how Tharbe, the daughter of an Ethiopian king, was infatuated with Moses (p. 138f.); the stylistic pattern of this romance is richer than George's usual method. But after a few paragraphs in a romantic vein, he returns to his favorite theme of chronology, emphasizing that all the historians "of circumcision and of grace" (i.e. Jews and Christians alike), with the exception of Eusebios, agree that Moses was born in the days of Inachos, and place the Exodus in the days of Apis (p. 140.10-16). Sometimes his descriptions of the settings for the action of the history are elaborate: he informs the reader (following Africanus) that there are no living organisms in the water of the Dead Sea, that burning torches stay on its surface and sink only when they are extinguished, that there are sources of asphalt in the area, and so forth (p. 114.12-24). The interest in the Dead Sea may have originated from his visits to the region; more difficult to grasp is why George starts to wax eloquent when describing the booty brought to Rome by Aemilius [Paulus] from Macedonia (p. 324.10-28).

George justifies his style by citing the case of Luke the Evangelist, who possessed "divine brevity" (*θεία συντομία*), the ability to express in a few words what many writers would describe in lengthy narratives (p. 387.20-22). This search for brevity explains

Theophanes' characterization of George's book as a "short (or rather "concise", σύντομος) chronicle"; evidently, he meant not the actual size of the work, but the manner of wording.

George is more concerned with the order of presentation than imagery. Even in Holy Writ he finds hyperbaton —the inversion of sequence— when the first is named last and the last appears first, and he makes mention of *Gen.* 10.2-31, where the sons of Noah are listed as Japheth, Ham and Shem, although Shem is the eldest and should, according to George, be listed first. Another example is the mentioning of the Kingdom of Babylon before the confusion of tongues, whereas strictly speaking the name "Babylon", which means "confusion" according to his mistaken etymological opinion, can only be used of the place afterwards (p. 105.21-28).

Of lesser interest for the history of literature are the anonymous chronographical treatises which appeared at the time of George and some decades later. We shall not examine these, but only indicate some titles. One short ("concise") *Chronography* is (wrongly?) attributed to the patriarch Nikephoros (of whom we shall speak later);<sup>7</sup> its earliest surviving version dates from ca. 829 (and certainly before 842). Another text (preserved in Vatic. gr. 2210 of the tenth century) is a *Chronicle* compiled in 854, but probably containing earlier layers. It can be considered as dependent on George; its information, however, on the rulers of Constantinople is defective, as is that of some other chronographies.<sup>8</sup> A compilation called *Select Histories* treated the period from the Creation to the emperor Anastasios I; but the sole fragment to have survived from this work covers the events from Adam to the Jewish king Ozias. The work appeared in the 880s.<sup>9</sup>

The historical discourse conventionally titled *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio* differs substantially from these chronological lists.<sup>10</sup> The designation was first used to refer to a work represented by a single fragment (preserved in Paris. gr. 1711), which relates the short reign of the emperor Michael I Rangabe (811-813), and the beginning of the Second Iconoclasm under Leo V the Armenian. A second fragment, devoted to the defeat of Nicephoros I by the Bulgarians in 811, was discovered in Vatic. gr. 2014 by I. Dujčev and, shortly afterwards, its connection with the preceding fragment was pointed out by H. Grégoire. Grégoire suggested further that the two fragments formed the final part of what he named the *Continuator of Malalas*. He also suggested that Theophanes was aware of the second fragment, the description of the expedition of 811.<sup>11</sup> This view is now generally

<sup>7</sup> *Χρονολογικὸν σύντομον*, ed. C. DE BOOR, *Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula historica*, Leipzig 1880, repr. New York 1975, 79-135.

<sup>8</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *The Search for the Past*, 284-287.

<sup>9</sup> A. WIRTH, *Aus orientalischen Chroniken*, Frankfurt a. M. 1894, 3-2; see HUNGER, *Lit.* I, 332f.

<sup>10</sup> A part of what follows has been published as †A. KAZHDAN-L. SHERRY, *Some Notes on the 'Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio'*, *BS* 58/1, 1997, 110-112.

<sup>11</sup> I. DUJČEV, *Novi žitniji danni za pohoda na Nikifora I v Bŭlgarija prez 811 god*, *Spisanie na Bŭlg. Akademija na naukite* 54, 1936, 147-188; ID., *La chronique byzantine de l'an 811*, *TM* 1, 1965, 205-254, repr. in ID., *Medioevo bizantino-slavo* 2, Rome 1968, 425-489; H. GRÉGOIRE, *Un nouveau*

accepted, but there are a number of problematical points concerning Grégoire's hypotheses. Hereafter we refer to the first fragment alone as the *Scriptor Incertus*.

While possible, it is not easy to reconcile the date of the composition of the *Scriptor Incertus* (and hence the *Continuator of Malalas*, following Grégoire's hypothesis), which must date to 815 at the earliest, with the availability of the text to Theophanes, who died in 817/8. However, Grégoire's first point, that there is a connection between the two fragments, deserves more detailed scrutiny. We have to understand that Grégoire's identification is based on a single fact, namely the similarity of the "psychosomatic" portrait of Nikephoros I in the story of the expedition of 811 with that of Michael I in the *Scriptor Incertus*. Portraits of this kind appear time and again in Byzantine chronographical and hagiographical works, and J. B. Bury drew attention to one example, the description of Leo V in the *Chronicle* of pseudo-Symeon Magistros. Bury suggested, however, that this portrayal was derived from the *Scriptor Incertus*.<sup>12</sup> Whatever the case, similarity of portraiture would seem a weak basis for conjecturing common authorship.

In order to make the first fragment a part of his *Continuator of Malalas* it was necessary for Grégoire to subject it to a surgical operation. Not only does the fragment survive in a manuscript of primarily hagiographical texts, but it also contains a typical hagiographical conclusion that required removal (and it is removed in F. Iadevaia's edition); it was also necessary to remove the reference to the conversion of "the godless Bulgarians" (ed. Iadevaia, 32.149) in 865, which could hardly be justified in a work that supposedly preceded Theophanes.<sup>13</sup>

But is the style of the two fragments really identical, as Grégoire asserted (without any supporting evidence)? We have our doubts. Of course, similar expressions can be found in both fragments, for instance ποιήσας ἡμέρας τινάς (p. 28.43, 29.51 and 51.50, 71.584-85), but there are differing features as well. First of all, the *Scriptor Incertus* abounds with non-classical words borrowed from the spoken language: μουλτεύσαντες (p. 44.144, cf. μούλτος in Theoph. 476.16), πάκτα χρυσίου (p. 51.51, cf. Theoph. 470.11, 13 etc.), ἐρόγενυσεν (p. 55.158, cf. ῥόγα in Theoph. 486.4 etc.), ποιοῦντες μαϊουμάδας (p. 40.47, cf. Theoph. 451.26), τσαγγάριος (p. 60.288), στραγλομαλωτάρια καὶ νακοτάπητα (p. 56.184-185), στρογ-

fragment du 'Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio', *Byzantion* 11, 1936, 417-427. Both fragments are republished together by F. IADEVAIA, *Scriptor Incertus*, Messina 1987. GRÉGOIRE's hypothesis is accepted "beyond all reasonable doubt" by J. WORTLEY, *Legends of the Byzantine Disaster of 811*, *Byzantion* 50, 1980, 544.

<sup>12</sup> J. B. BURY, *A Source of Symeon Magister*, *BZ* 1, 1892, 572-574, see an emendation by C. DE BOOR, *Ἐπιόγουος*, *BZ* 2, 1893, 297. Psychosomatic portraits are to be found in George the Monk 1, 322.11-25, as well as in the *SynaxCP*, such as in the entries on St. Akepsimas (col. 189.19-22) or on St. Philetairos (col. 695.46-696.2).

<sup>13</sup> On the basis of this passage L. TOMIĆ, *Fragmenti jednog istorijskog spisa IX veka*, *ZRVI* 1, 1952, 78-85, dated the text in the second half of the ninth century.



γυλοπρόσωπος (p. 50.27), and so on.<sup>14</sup> There is not a single word of this type in the Story of the expedition of 811. Describing Nikephoros' followers, the author of the Story uses general terms *patrikioi*, *archontes*, *axiomatikoι* (p. 27.7) whereas the *Scriptor Incertus* is not afraid of specific terms such as *logothetes* (p. 51.70, 52.95) or *megas domestikos* (p. 43.130).<sup>15</sup> Another lexical distinction between the two texts is the *Scriptor's* affection for the word λοιπόν which opens at least twenty-nine sentences, whereas we find only two such usages in the Story of the expedition.

It seems that the style of the Story of the expedition is more dynamic than that of the *Scriptor*: not only is the narration about the battle of 811 teeming with verbs of movement, but a less dramatic episode, Nikephoros' actions in Krum's capital, contains numerous active verbs and participles: ἤρξατο διαμερίζειν, ἀνοίξας, διένειμε, ἀνελθών, διακενῶν, ἠγάλλετο καὶ ἔλεγεν, etc. On the other hand, the *Scriptor* has a predilection for verbs of stability: describing the expedition of Michael I against the Bulgarians he employs such verbs as ἴσταντο παρατεταγμένοι (twice p. 41.59 and 61), στήκω (l. 63 and 71), παρατάξαντο (l. 57); even ἔρχομαι appears in a figurative sense, with ἦλθον εἰς ἀδυναμίαν (l. 65). Later on, verbs of flight and persecution are used, primarily ἔφυγον and κατεδίωξαν, which vividly depict the retreat of an army.

The causes that bring about events in both fragments are treated differently. Nikephoros, in the Story of his expedition, is arrogant, he boasted of his justice and is sure of God's support; he perished, explains the author, because of his foolishness and deceptiveness (p. 32.154-155). Michael I, in the *Scriptor Incertus*, explains the defeat of his father-in-law by referring to a much more general cause: God, he declares, was not benevolent (οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ instead of the edition's εὐδοκεῖ) to Nikephoros and his kin (p. 44.133-135). The image of Nikephoros, the protagonist of the first fragment, is relatively free from sweeping generalizations. While the anonymous author evidently does not like Nikephoros, he nevertheless envisages him as a human being, albeit a bad (arrogant) one; the image of Leo V, the protagonist of the *Scriptor Incertus*, is that of a standard "tyrant": to describe him the writer piles up commonplace negative epithets such as cruel, impious, adulterer, cowardly, miserable, the son of perdition, he who destroyed the Church, and so on. Yet the *Scriptor* was able to observe details. His dialogues are colorful. For instance, he narrates how the *patrikios* Thomas asked the emperor to send two wagons (or horses — ὀχήματα, instead of ed. ὀνόματα) to carry away the sick and crippled patriarch [Nikephoros] (p. 68.511-515). The description of the enemy, however, is abstract.

Thus it might be more prudent to consider the two fragments as independent. The Story of the expedition of 811 is a *martyrion*, written (probably in the second half of the

<sup>14</sup> On the rare term στεφανίτης that the *Scriptor* shares with Theophanes see I. ROCHOW, Zwei missverständene Termini in der Chronik des Theophanes, *BS* 47, 1986, 26f.

<sup>15</sup> Similar lexical differences can be observed between Theophanes and the Story of the expedition of 811: Theophanes (p. 491.27) boldly speaks of a σοῦδα, while the anonymous author prefers, in the corresponding passage, the classical φραγμός (p. 29.72 and 31.104).

ninth century) in a language remote from the colloquial idiom. It was close in character to the *Martyrion of the Twenty Sabaites*, while the *Scriptor Incertus*, in its vocabulary and in its animosity toward Iconoclasm, reminds one of Theophanes and could have been produced as an attempt to continue "the jewel of middle Byzantine historiography".

Photios devoted an entry of his *Bibliotheca* (cod. 67) to a certain Sergios the Confessor. The man may be identified as St. Sergios the Confessor, praised in an entry in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* and in an anonymous kanon, who was born in the capital to a noble family and, being an Iconodule, was persecuted and exiled by the emperor Theophilos (829-42). There is no reason to see in him Photios' father, whose name was also Sergios.<sup>16</sup> Photios relates that Sergios' book began with the deeds of Michael II,<sup>17</sup> returned to the lawless actions of [Constantine V] Kopronymos, and then reached the eighth year of the same Michael. Sergios, says Photios, described in detail Michael's state and Church affairs, his military actions and his theological views. Sergios' language was, in Photios' judgement, lucid and simple, his vocabulary, figures and other elements of discourse clear, so that the work seemed to have been produced extemporaneously; the book possessed natural grace and was free from over-elaboration. The language of the *logos*, concludes Photios, is appropriate for an ecclesiastical history.

One may suppose that Sergios served as a source for historians who worked in the tenth century,<sup>18</sup> but it is impossible to prove such a hypothesis. Also we cannot prove that it was Sergios who authored the fragments known as the *Scriptor Incertus* (especially since the *Scriptor* begins with the reign of Michael I, perhaps even with the reign of an earlier emperor). The only certain fact is that the *Chronicle* by Sergios (now lost) was written in the second quarter of the ninth century, and was devoted to the events of the second half of the eighth and the first quarter of the ninth centuries; it presented events from the Iconodule view-point and was, in Photios' opinion, coherent and plain in vocabulary. Such a manner of writing, created or recreated by George Synkellos, was typical of many historical works of the first half of the ninth century.

As far as we can tell, the patriarch Nikephoros was the closest to Theophanes among the historians of this period. We know Nikephoros' biography primarily from his *Vita* written by Ignatios the Deacon (see below, p. 352-356). Nikephoros was born in Constantinople in the 750s to the family of the *asekretis* Theodore; Constantine V exiled Theodore to Nicaea for his Iconodule views. Nikephoros followed his father, but as the Iconoclastic fervor abated, he returned to the capital and served, for some while, as

<sup>16</sup> A. NOGARA, Sergio il Confessore e il cod. 67 della Biblioteca di Fozio patriarca di Costantinopoli, *Aevum* 52, 1978, 261-266; cf. J. SCHAMP, *Photios, historien des lettres*, Paris 1987, 53 n. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Is the emperor being spoken of here in fact Michael III, and not Michael II? Photios did not make a single derogatory remark about this emperor, speaking of his "deeds" and his "belief" (δόξα) in the Godhead. Michael II was an Iconoclast, while Michael III restored icon worship.

<sup>18</sup> F. BARIŠIĆ, Les sources de Génésios et du continuateur de Théophane pour l'histoire de Michel II (820-829), *Byzantion* 31, 1961, 260f.

secretary "of the emperors" (probably Irene and Constantine VI). He retired, founded several monasteries on the eastern shore of the Bosphorus, came back to Constantinople ca. 802 and was appointed director of "the largest poorhouse" in the city. He succeeded Tarasios as patriarch of Constantinople (806-15), despite being a layman. His episcopate was full of troubles: Nikephoros attempted unsuccessfully to appease the radical Stoudites whose political aim was to undermine imperial authority in ecclesiastical affairs, and by 815 he had to deal with the resurgence of the Iconoclastic movement; he did not yield to the demands of the emperor Leo V and refused to sign the decisions of the Iconoclastic council of 815. He had to go into exile, and in 828 he died in the monastery of St. Theodore near Chrysopolis.<sup>19</sup>

Several of Nikephoros' works survived, principally his treatises defending the cult of icons (*Antirrhetikoi*, *Apologetikoi*, *Refutation* of Eusebios of Caesarea's theory of icons, etc.).<sup>20</sup> His teaching about the holy icon (like that of Damaskenos) was closely interwoven with his esthetic ideas, with his concept of the image.<sup>21</sup> But unlike Damaskenos, Nikephoros drew widely on Aristotelian material to support his arguments. As P. Alexander formulates it, "it is the new method which characterizes this scholastic period of Iconoclasm, not the traditional and christological arguments."<sup>22</sup>

According to Nikephoros, there is a radical difference between description (γραφή) and circumscription (περιγραφή) (*Antirrh.* II: PG 100, 356A-357A). Circumscription is an ontological act that establishes boundaries in space, time or category (κατάληψις), while description is an act of imitation, of representing the likeness of a prototype. The icon or likeness is a copy of the original, differing from it in substance but similar in outline, in other words not identical but possessing a relation (σχέσις) with it (*Antirrh.* I: PG 100,

<sup>19</sup> The main monograph on Nikephoros is that by ALEXANDER, *Patr. Nicephorus*; cf. also LIPŠIC, *Očerki*, 268-296; J. J. TRAVIS, *The Role of Patriarch Nicephorus (a.d. 758-828), Archbishop of Constantinople, in the Iconoclastic Controversy*, Denver 1977, as well as the unpublished dissertation by C. J. LARDIERO, *The Critical Patriarchate of Nikephoros of Constantinople (806-15)*, 1993.

<sup>20</sup> A survey of his published and unpublished dogmatic treatises can be found in BECK, *Kirche*, 489-491; cf. also *Tusculum-Lexikon*, Munich 1982, 558-560; R. P. BLAKE, Note sur l'activité littéraire de Nicéphore Ier patriarche de Constantinople, *Byzantion* 14, 1939, 1-15; V. GRUMEL, Les 'Douze chapitres contre les iconomaques' de saint Nicéphore de Constantinople, *REB* 17, 1959, 127-135. On his theological and ecclesiological views see A. J. VISSER, *Nikephoros und der Bilderstreit*, The Hague 1952; J. J. TRAVIS, *In Defense of the Faith: The Theology of Nicephorus the Patriarch of Constantinople*, Brookline Mass. 1984; P. O'CONNELL, *The Ecclesiology of St. Nicephorus I (758-828), Patriarch of Constantinople*, Rome 1972 [OrChrAn 194].

<sup>21</sup> See V. V. BYČKOV, Die ästhetischen Anschauungen des Patriarchen Nikephoros, *BS* 50, 1989, 181-192; M.-J. BAUDINET, La relation iconique à Byzance au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après Nicéphore le patriarche, *Les études philosophiques*, Jan.-March 1978, 92-98; cf. M.-J. MODZAIN-BAUDINET, *Nicéphore: Discours contre les iconoclastes*, Paris 1989; A. AVENARIUS, Der Geist der byzantinischen Ikonodulie und seine Tradition, *JÖB* 42, 1992, 45f.; Ch. BARBAER, From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm, *Gesta* 34, 1995, 7f.

<sup>22</sup> ALEXANDER, *Patr. Nicephorus*, 191.

277C). Like Damaskenos, Nikephoros emphasized that the original was not "present" in the icon, their relationship was that of form not essence. The icon is not an idol (as the Iconoclasts liked to claim): its external (artistic) qualities are of no consequence. Rather, the function of the icon is to reflect the original, while the idol is "empty" and false, with no original (archetype) underneath. Probably, more strongly than Damaskenos, Nikephoros sought to put emphasis not on the mystical qualities of the image but on its "realistic" imitation/reflection, not on prefiguration of the future but on the copying of the visible cosmos.

Another difference between icon and idol consists in the uniformity of the Christian image: whereas the false (pagan) representations are multifarious, all the icons of Christ are identical. Although they may have individual features, they are torches kindled from the same flame (*Apolog.*: PG 100, 612D-613A). Nikephoros' theory helps to explain, among other things, the so-called "standardization" of Byzantine imagery: the truth is unique, and its reflection must be uniform, allowing only minor, insignificant variations. The image may be graphic or literary, expressed in words. Nikephoros defines words or discourses (λόγοι) as "icons of objects" (*Antirrh.* III: PG 100, 381C). He prefers graphic images to those in words, since they are more persuasive and easier to perceive.

Nikephoros' *œuvre* is not limited to dogma and polemics. The patriarch played a key part in the revival of historical writing. He authored a chronicle entitled *Concise History* (Ἱστορία σύντομος), the title usually understood as "Short History" or (in Latin) *Breviarium*.<sup>23</sup> Nikephoros' *History* survived in two manuscripts: Vatic. gr. 977, which stops at 769,<sup>24</sup> and London. Add. 19390, which relates events up to the year 713.<sup>25</sup> Scholars are still discussing which of them is closer to the author's original, or whether they represent two authorial revisions. Another thorny problem is the date of the completion of the *History*: C. Mango suggests, albeit as a "tentative conclusion" that the work was compiled "as early as c. 780";<sup>26</sup> P. Speck, basing his view on Nikephoros' political tendencies expressed in the *History*, thinks that the work reflects the situation of 790 and therefore

<sup>23</sup> C. MANGO, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*, Washington 1990 [CFHB XIII= Dumbarton Oaks Texts X], with a detailed review by P. SPECK, *BZ* 83, 1990, 471-478 and another by B. FLUSIN, *REB* 50, 1992, 278-281, the latter handling primarily the history of the text. This edition is reproduced, with a modern Greek translation, by L. KOSTARELE, Athens 1994. The Eng. tr. by N. TOBIAS-R. SANTORO, *An Eyewitness to History: The Short History of Nikephoros our Holy Father the Patriarch of Constantinople*, Brookline Mass. 1995, is based on the old edition.

<sup>24</sup> C. DE BOOR, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica*, Leipzig 1880, 1-77.

<sup>25</sup> L. OROSZ, *The London Manuscript of Nikephoros' Breviarium*, Budapest 1948.

<sup>26</sup> C. MANGO, The Breviarium of the Patriarch Nicephorus, *Byzantium: Tribute to A. N. Stratos*, Athens 1986, 551; in the preface to his edition (as above n. 22, 12) MANGO suggests a slightly different date: "perhaps, to the 780s."

had to have been produced close to 790-92.<sup>27</sup> No less confused is the question of the sources of Nikephoros: in many cases (from the events of 668 on) he evidently had a common source with Theophanes, and it is often postulated that this source may be the "Great Chronographer".

We know about the *Megas Chronographos* only from additions to the *Paschal Chronicle* in Vatic. gr. 1941, copied by a single hand of the eleventh century (another manuscript, Stockholm, Königl. Bibl. Va 7:2, is late, contains only part of these additions, and has no independent significance). The text consists of eighteen fragments<sup>28</sup> and twice refers to the *Megas Chronographos*; the second reference, in fragment thirteen, is evidently the product of misunderstanding: it promises to speak "about portents", but narrates instead the routing of the Roman army by the Chagan. The fragments form two groups in the manuscript: fr. 1-12 and 15-18 are copied together, fr. 13 and 14 stood in two separate places. The two groups differ in their content as well: the first group deals with various natural calamities which struck the empire, principally earthquakes (ten or so cases), supplemented by fire, plague and a downpour of cinder; fr. 13 and 14 depict, respectively, the defeat of an army and the construction of a wall. The last event described in the excerpts is the confused movement of stars at the birth of Leo IV in 750, which gives the *terminus post quem* for the text.

It is usually accepted that the *Great Chronographer* was a work of a chronicler of the second half of the eighth century and that it served as the common source for Nikephoros and Theophanes.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Mango, following the hypothesis expressed by P. Maas, suggested that the *Great Chronographer* —as known from the extant fragments— was "a simple derivative" from Theophanes and Nikephoros.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Mango postulates the existence of two Constantinopolitan chronicles used by Theophanes and Nikephoros: one extending to the year 720 and appearing to be favorable to Leo III, and the second being Iconophile, perhaps ending in 769. The existence of these chronicles, we have to remind the reader, is deduced only from the striking parallels in the presentation of various events by Nikephoros and Theophanes. Speck, however, has another explanation for this: he thinks that there was a dossier collected by George Synkellos, who

<sup>27</sup> P. SPECK, *Das geteilte Dossier. Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und die seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nikephoros*, Bonn 1988 [Poikila Byzantina 9], 429f. In the review of MANGO's edition he even assumes that Nikephoros alluded to the revolt of Thomas the Slav, which would place the *History* in the 820s.

<sup>28</sup> According to the edition by P. SCHREINER, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* 1, Vienna 1975 [CFHB XII/1], 37-45 (German translation in vol. 3, Vienna 1979 [CFHB XII/3], 11-15).

<sup>29</sup> L. M. WHITBY, The Great Chronographer and Theophanes, *BMGS* 8, 1983, 1-20; ID., Theophanes' Chronicle Source for the Reigns of Justin II, Tiberius and Maurice, *Byzantion* 53, 1983, 312-345.

<sup>30</sup> P. MAAS, Metrische Akklamationen der Byzantiner, *BZ* 21, 1912, 47f.

shared it with Nikephoros, but then continued to work on it and gave it to Theophanes (this explains the differences between the two).<sup>31</sup>

Photios (*Bibl.*, cod. 66) read the *Concise History* in the extended version which ended with the marriage of Leo IV and Irene in 769 (ed. Mango, par. 88). To begin with, he praises the language of the book in almost the same terms as he used when speaking of Sergios: it is plain and clear, without excesses. Then Photios adds some supplementary features: Nikephoros is a true and perfect rhetorician, who avoids "innovations" (*νεωτεροποιόν*) and follows the well trodden path, and in so doing he would have surpassed many of his predecessors, had he not been too concise (*συντετμημένος*), thereby losing some grace. Photios has no entry on Theophanes. Did he not take into account the text of Theophanes when characterizing the good qualities of Nikephoros?

### B. Biography and the problem of authorship (BHG 1787-1792a)

Theophanes was sanctified by the Byzantine Church, and his life was described by many authors, beginning with Theodore of Stoudios, who outlined the main events of Theophanes' exploits in a letter sent in early 818 (or 817?) to the nuns Megalo (Theophanes' widow) and Maria, and more briefly in a missive to Niketas, *hegoumenos* of Medikion.<sup>32</sup> Afterwards Theodore composed an *Enkomion* for Theophanes in which he emphasized the nobility and wealth of the saint and his wife.<sup>33</sup> In the mid-ninth century the patriarch Methodios wrote a *Vita of Theophanes*, the main episodes of which are the chaste separation of the saint from his newly-wed wife and the foundation of his monastery (see below, p. 372-374).

Some later versions also survived which seem to depend on Methodios; at any rate they convey no additional information of any significance. Latyšev suggests that a short anonymous *Vita* was written by Nicholas of Stoudios. Another *Vita*, authored by a certain Sabas, is known only in an Old Church-Slavonic translation (see below, p. 340).

None of these numerous hagiographers mentions the production of the *Chronography*, but from the *Vita* by Methodios we learn that Theophanes was not illiterate: he mastered calligraphy when he became monk.

<sup>31</sup> The idea was expressed in P. SPECK *Artabasdos, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren*, Bonn 1981 [Poikila Byzantina 2], 151, and developed in ID., *Das geteilte Dossier*, 503-519.

<sup>32</sup> FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, nos. 323 and 319.9-12.

<sup>33</sup> C. VAN DE VORST, Un panégyrique de Théophile le Chronographe par s. Théodore Stoudite, *AB* 31, 1912, 11-23; S. EFTHYMIADIS, Le panégyrique de s. Théophile le Confesseur par s. Théodore Stoudite (BHG 1792b), *AB* 111, 1993, 259-290 with an addition in *AB* 112, 1994, 104.

Theophanes was born ca. 755-60, possibly in Constantinople, to the family of a *strategos*, and at the age of about twenty was appointed a high-ranking courtier (*strator*) by Leo IV (775-80). He married Megalo, the daughter of an influential *patrikios*, but the marriage was of short duration: the spouses separated and settled in different monasteries. Hagiographers affirm that Theophanes participated in the Council of 787; his name, however, is not included among the signatories of this Council. He was a supporter of icon veneration, and Leo V exiled him to the island of Samothrace where he died in 817 or 818.<sup>34</sup>

The authorship of the *Chronography* is attributed to Theophanes both in the manuscripts and in the Byzantine tradition. Mango, however, questioned this attribution and saw in Theophanes only the editor of the text written by George Synkellos, his friend. This view was supported by Speck but rejected by I. Čičurov, Ja. Ljubarskij and I. Rochov; Ševčenko speaks cautiously of “the maximalist interpretation of Mango’s thesis” and expresses no opinion whether and to what extent Theophanes gathered his materials himself “or inherited them from Synkellos.”<sup>35</sup>

Mango brings forth several points in support of his view. Firstly, he refers to the preamble of the *Chronography* (which he considers an authentic product of Theophanes’ pen), where the chronicler calls himself “illiterate and sinful” and praises George Synkellos who left to his friend both the finished book and “materials” (*ἀφορμαί*) to complete his work (Theoph. p. 4.2). Thus Mango suggests that George Synkellos “compiled a bulky dossier” which he gave to Theophanes for editing and publication. The weak point of this conclusion is, however, the word *ἀφορμαί* which means primarily “starting point” or even “instigation, stimulus”; rhetoricians used it to designate “material for argumentation”. The theme of the author’s incapacity to write and his yielding to external pressure (of a friend, a superior or a saint) is a common topic of hagiographical *exordia*. Ignatios the Deacon, for

<sup>34</sup> The former date is accepted by C. VAN DE VORST, *En quelle année mourut s. Théodore le Chronographe?*, *AB* 31, 1912, 148-156; the majority of scholars accept the latter date.

<sup>35</sup> C. MANGO, *Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?*, *ZRVI* 18, 1978, 9-17, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. XI; ID., Introduction to C. MANGO-R. SCOTT with the assistance of G. GREATREX, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*, Oxford 1997, liii-lxiii; SPECK, *Das geteilte Dossier*, 499; more cautious is R. MAISANO, Il ‘sistema’ compositivo della cronaca di Teofane, *Syndesmos. Studi in onore di R. Anastasi* 2, Catania 1994, 279-282. On the other view see I. ČIČUROV, Feofan Ispovednik-publikator, redaktor, avtor? *Viz Vrem* 42, 1981, 78-87; Ja. N. LJUBARSKIJ, Feofan Ispovednik i istočniki ego ‘Hronografii’, *Viz Vrem* 45, 1984, 86; I. ROCHOV, *Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes*, Berlin 1991 [BBA 57], 40; T. A. DUKET, *A Study in Byzantine Historiography: An Analysis of Theophanes’ Chronographia and its Relationship to Theophylact’s History* (unpubl. dissertation of 1980), 306-337. Cf. ŠEVČENKO, *The Search for the Past*, 287f. Later, P. SPECK, *Der ‘zweite’ Theophanes*, *Varia V*, Bonn 1994 [Poikila Byzantina 13], 431-483, launched the hypothesis of two Theophanes: the saint who had nothing to do with the *Chronography* and the editor (author?) of the *Chronography* who was transformed into a saint by mistake.

instance, announces, in the preamble to his *Vita of Nikephoros*, that he culled the stimulus to write (τὴν ἀφορμὴν τοῦ λέγειν) from his hero.<sup>36</sup> Photios uses a similar expression (*Bibl.* cod. 214, vol. 3, 125.22-24) saying that the judge Olympiodoros encouraged (παρασχεῖν τοῦ λόγου τὰς ἀφορμὰς) Hierokles to write his book *On Providence*. Therefore, while Mango’s view of the preamble is possible, one should not necessarily accept it unreservedly.

Secondly, Mango believes that the *Chronography* was completed before the end of 814, since the author characterizes Leo V as “pious” (p. 500.4) a statement that could only have been made, Mango suggests, before the revival of Iconoclasm under this emperor. George completed the *Select Chronography* around 810, and Theophanes, since he began his work after the *Select Chronography* was completed, had only a few years to produce his *Chronography* (810-14). The task was extremely difficult because Theophanes was in these years incapacitated by a grave illness. However, this chronological argument is not as watertight as it looks. Theophanes says that Leo, *patrikios* and *strategos* of the Anatolikon, was selected to seize the imperial authority “because he was pious, very courageous and able in all respects.” The sentence is an “alien (or “actorial”) speech”, expressing the point of view of those who decided the destiny of the throne or even of Leo himself rather than the point of view of the author. Leo came to power as an Iconophile, and changed his position later. The phrase could have been written in 815 or thereafter. On the other hand, George could have shared his material, if he did share it, with Theophanes long before 810. Theophanes, therefore, may have had more time to write the *Chronography* than Mango calculates.

Thirdly, Mango stresses that Theophanes, the son of a *strategos* and himself a *strator*, was not a man of high culture. But was the *Chronography* the product of a sophisticated mind? (We shall return to its stylistic qualities later.) Certainly Theophanes was not illiterate: Mango himself refers to his study in calligraphy, and Čičurov suggests that George saw in Theophanes a historian capable of continuing his *Chronography*. Theophanes evidently corresponded with Theodore of Stoudios, who stressed that the saint’s ordeal was the completion of his “divine knowledge” (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, ep. 214.13-14). Later, in the letter to Megalo and Maria, Theodore praised Theophanes not only as a confessor of Christ but also as a man of great reason and, more specifically, as possessing a mind desirous of scholarship and full of divine knowledge (ep. 323.6-7). Indeed, the Stoudite’s letter is a panegyric of the deceased. But was Theodore so tactless as to pile up such epithets to magnify an illiterate former officer?

It is true that Theophanes’ biographers ignored his literary activity; but the anonymous hagiographer of Michael the Synkellos (see below, p. 257f.), famous grammarian and homilist, neglects as well to mention that his hero was a writer. The silence of the hagiographer is not sufficient, therefore, to justify the assumption that the subject of the hagiography was not a writer. And while Methodios, in his biography of Theophanes,

<sup>36</sup> *Nicephori Opuscula historica*, ed. DE BOOR, 140.21-23.

drew special attention to the saint's physical training (the pankration, wrestling, running, jumping, hunting and riding), the anonymous biographer of the saint stressed that from his boyhood Theophanes had learned both Holy Writ and "external (i.e. secular) wisdom".<sup>37</sup>

Mango's fourth argument is based on the author's special interest in events in Syria and Palestine—he even seems to have drawn on a number of oriental sources. We do not know anything about Theophanes' travels to the East, whereas it is probably the case that George visited Palestine. But how can we prove that the chronicler's knowledge of the Orient was first-hand? His interest in the wider world was not limited to the Orient—the *Chronography* contains copious data concerning events on the northern frontier of the empire.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, Mango's observations make George Synkellos' authorship possible but not mandatory: George could have entrusted his friend with the task of editing his work, but we have no evidence that he did actually do so.

Mango, however, stops at the most interesting point. "I have refrained from a stylistic analysis," he says, since he sees in the *Chronography* nothing more than a "scissors and paste job".<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Ševčenko underscores the difference between the two texts in "style" or "level." "Theophanes' style and learning were inferior to those of Synkellos." We have seen above that, in Ševčenko's perception, "style" was a matter of level of vocabulary and grammar, and George is unquestionably closer to the classical norms of the Greek language. Theophanes was much more medieval an author than his elder friend. Whether we can define his manner of expression as "inferior" is, however, a question of taste.

<sup>37</sup> V. LATYŠEV, *Mefodija žitie*, 4.22-23; *Theoph.*, 2, 4.18-19.

<sup>38</sup> The data are collected and commented upon by I. ČIČUROV, *Vizantijskie istoričeskie sočinenija: 'Hronografija' Feofana, 'Breviarij' Nikifora*, Moscow 1980, 24-144. Cf. also V. BEŠEVILIEV, *Sŭobštenije na Teofan za osnovaneto na Bŭlgarskata dŭržava, Izvestija na Narodnija musej Varna* 18, 1982, 31-53.

<sup>39</sup> C. MANGO, *The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750-850*, *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, Washington 1975, repr. in *ID.*, *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. VII, 36 n. 30.

### C. Theophanes' preamble: the problem of self-appreciation

C. DE BOOR, *Theophanis chronographia*, Leipzig 1883-85; repr. Hildesheim 1963, I, 3f. ;

Engl. tr. C. MANGO - R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor*.

*Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Oxford 1997

Theophanes' preamble differs substantially from *exordia* of late Roman historians, secular and ecclesiastical alike.<sup>40</sup> Both Prokopios of Caesarea and Eusebios are proud of their role as historians whose task it is to bring to future generations a truthful account of momentous events, and elements of similar self-appreciation are present in the *prooimia* of such less individual authors as Theodore Anagnostes and Evagrius. The key points of Theophanes' preamble are his illiteracy and sinfulness, his incapacity to fulfill the role imposed on him from without. It was the "most blessed abbas George", a well-read polymath, who perused uncounted books of historians and chroniclers and created the history from Adam to Diocletian; before his death George incited his friend to continue his work, even though Theophanes was aware of his own ignorance and understood that the task was beyond his ability. Again Theophanes repeats that George admonished him not to leave the work unfinished, and explains that he set himself to the task "compelled" only "by his obedience to George" (ἀναγκασθέντες διὰ τὴν τοῦτου ὑπακοήν). He too studied various books and compiled this *chronographeion* encompassing events from Diocletian to Michael I and [his son] Theophylaktos. And then Theophanes goes on to state, like John Damaskenos half a century before him, that he did not introduce "anything of his own" (οὐδὲν ἄφ' ἑαυτῶν), but only what he had found in the books of old historians and writers (λογογράφοι). At the end of the preamble, Theophanes asks his reader to be thankful to God if he is able to find anything of use in the chronicle, and to the chronicler, illiterate and sinful as he is, who worked with the Lord's help. But if anything mistaken is found to exist in his account, it should be attributed to "the illiteracy and laziness of [his] mind crawling on the soil".

In the first part of this volume we came across this same dichotomy: writers of the eighth century relentlessly presented themselves as unable to do their work properly, as compelled by an external force to set to work, yet at the same time as an instrument of the Holy Spirit. This is a literary position, differing from the literary position of a typical *literatus* of the sixth century, but it should not be taken as indicating any real incapacity on the part of Theophanes or any other Byzantine writer who happens to assume such stock-in-trade modesty.

<sup>40</sup> The problem was raised by I. ČIČUROV, *K probleme avtorskogo samosoznanija vizantijskih istorikov IV-IX vv. Antičnosť i Vizantijskaja*, Moscow 1975, 203-217, and developed in *ID.*, *Mesto 'Hronografii' Feofana v rannevizantijskoj istoriografičeskoj tradicii, Drevnejsie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR*, Moscow 1983, 20-41. cf. R. MAISANO, *Il problema della forma letteraria nel proemi storiografici bizantini*, *BZ* 78, 1985, 334.

Theophanes himself rarely makes an appearance on the pages of the *Chronography*. Physically he appears only twice: first, in his recollections about an extremely cold February of 764 when the Propontis froze and he played on the ice with other boys of his age (p. 434.23-24), and second, when he narrates how twenty-five years after the death of Constantine V (i.e. in 800), the most pious of emperors, the patriarch Tarasios and he witnessed a miracle (p. 440.8-10). This surface "objectivity" does not signify, however, Theophanes' impartiality. Nor should we view Theophanes as little more than a "scissors-and-paste compiler" (Ševčenko's words, modeled on those of Mango). Certainly, there are repetitions and contradictions in the narrative of Theophanes, and Mango indicates, for instance, that the chronicler refers to the *patrikios* John Pitzigaudes as having been mentioned many times earlier in the narrative (p. 355.29), whereas in fact he had been mentioned only once before (l. 16).<sup>41</sup> But do these contradictions, repetitions and borrowings from various sources mean that Theophanes compiled his material mechanically, without imposing on it any systematic view, any "ideology"?

It is well known that Theophanes was very critical toward both the Iconoclastic emperors and Nikephoros I (despite the latter's Orthodoxy). This attitude may be explained by the historian's political stance, his animosity to Iconoclasm and to Nikephoros' attempts to restrict monastic property.<sup>42</sup> More intriguing is the issue of Theophanes' attitude toward the emperors of the past. He evidently praised Constantine I, "the most divine and most Christian" ruler (p. 11.33, cf. 13.29, 15.5, 21.27), whose other epithets include "great" (p. 13.32, 16.12), very gentle (p. 20.7), pious (p. 28.23 and 42, 33.17) and "most pious victor" (p. 27.31, cf. 29.36). He presents us with a list of the emperor's "psychosomatic" virtues: courage, a sharp mind, brilliant education, justice, promptness in good works, dignity of appearance (ὄξιοπρέπεια ὄψεως), success in warfare, and firmness in faith (p. 20.12-17). As R. Scott emphasized, Theophanes developed the image of Constantine he found in Malalas: his Constantine was not just a Christian but an Orthodox Christian, anti-Arian and even anti-Iconoclast.<sup>43</sup>

After Constantine only a few emperors —Theodosios I, Theodosios II and, in particular, Marcian— are eulogized, principally for their piety. Then the position changes: both Anastasios I and Maurice are strongly censured, despite their positive treatment in Theophanes' main sources, Malalas and Theophylaktos Simokatta.<sup>44</sup> Even if we assume

<sup>41</sup> MANGO, *The Availability*, 36 n. 30. This particular case is not completely clear since ὁ πολλὰ λαχὼς λεχθεὶς πανεύφημος ἀνὴρ of Theophanes might mean "the famous man much spoken of in many ways".

<sup>42</sup> F. TINNENFELD, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie*, Munich 1971, 60-80.

<sup>43</sup> R. SCOTT, *The Image of Constantine in Malalas and Theophanes*, in P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Cambridge 1994 [Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications 2], 57-71.

<sup>44</sup> ČIČUROV, *Mesto 'Hronografii'*, 43-53.

that he used a different source for the reign of Maurice,<sup>45</sup> it was deliberate choice on the part of Theophanes to recount "anti-imperial" characteristics. Phokas is severely berated, in accordance with the entire Byzantine tradition. There is no overt animosity toward Herakleios but there is no praise either: when Theophanes calls him μέγας (p. 335.4) he means "elder" not "great"; he describes Herakleios' retreat from Syria (p. 337.8-10) and disapproves of the "so-called Edict" (the *Ekthesis* of 638) which Herakleios promulgated "as if doing something great" (p. 330.21).<sup>46</sup> Philippikos-Bardanes is a heretic and libertine (p. 381.30-32), and Theodosios III is portrayed as being remote from public affairs (p. 385.21-22). Even the role of the great Justinian I is downplayed by Theophanes in comparison with his main source for this period, Prokopios of Caesarea: time and again Theophanes omits to mention the positive characteristics of Justinian inserted in Prokopios' *History of Wars*, and in so doing he reinforces the significance of Belisarios.<sup>47</sup>

It could be argued that Theophanes, having created the imperial paragon of Constantine the Great, tried to demonstrate that the subsequent rulers of the empire were not on the same level. The concluding pages devoted to the evil actions of Nikephoros I present a contrasting image of the emperor who mistreated the whole population of Byzantium. The empire, in the conscious or subconscious vision of the historian, showed a development from the good Constantine to the wicked Nikephoros.

During the course of this steady decline, various disasters hit the country. Some of them are natural calamities, such as earthquakes, plague, famine; others are social catastrophes. Often Theophanes speaks about tyranny (the word "tyrant" and the terms derived from it are used no less than fifty times in the *Chronography*, mostly in its first half); more than thirty-five times the chronicler employs the word στάσις (riot); related terms such as πόλεμος δημόσιος, πόλεμος ἐμφύλιος, ταραχος, νεωτερισμός, ἀνταρσία, ἐπιβουλή and the like are also frequently used. Certainly, Theophanes found the majority of these words (and events) in his "dossier", but it was he who was in search of these words and these events.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> O. ADAMEK, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Kaisers Mauricius*, 1, Graz 1890, 12f. On sources for this period see also D. OLSTER, *The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century*, Amsterdam 1993, 1-4, 49.

<sup>46</sup> On Theophanes' criticism of Herakleios see J. FERBER, *Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius*, in E. and M. JEFFREYS and A. MOFFATT (eds.), *Byzantine Papers*, Canberra 1981, 32-42. Although Ferber ignores Čičurov's work, he arrives to a similar conclusion, that the *Chronography* was "a meaningfully categorized whole, and not a patchwork of sources" (p. 33).

<sup>47</sup> I. ČIČUROV, *Feofan Ispovednik—kompilator Prokopija*, *Viz Vrem* 37, 1976, 67-73.

<sup>48</sup> I. KRIVOUCHINE, *La révolte près de Monocarton vue par Évagre, Théophylacte Simocatta et Théophane*, *Byzantion* 63, 1993, 154-172 (cf. ID., *Stasis po Feofilaktu Simokatte, Evagriju i Feofanu, Iz istorii Vizantii i vizantinovedenija*, Leningrad 1991, 47-57) shows how Theophanes reorganized the history of the events of 588/9 described by Simokatta; his attitude to the revolt is less emotional than that of his predecessors and he does not consider it worthy of serious attention. Cf. I. ROCHOW, *Zur Rolle der Bevölkerung des byzantinischen Reiches vom 7. bis Anfang des 9. Jh. (610-813) in der*



We observed in the previous section that the Byzantine writers of the eighth century largely ignored two major political themes: icon worship and the Arab invasion, and that these issues were introduced by Stephen the Sabaite in the *Martyrion of the twenty Sabaites* and by another Stephen in the *Vita of Stephen the Younger*. It was Theophanes, however, who developed these two topics to the full.

While George Synkellos remains largely oblivious to the question of images, Theophanes takes a clear stand in support of the veneration of icons. The theme of the icon comes to the fore long before he starts describing the age of the Iconoclastic emperors. To begin with, the term "icon" has a "neutral" sense, designating the image in general: Julian, we read in the *Chronography*, ordered that Zeus, Ares, Hermes and other "demons" be depicted together with his own images (εἰκόνες) and punished those who refused to worship them (p. 49.5-7; derived from Theodore Anagnostes, ed. G. Ch. Hansen, p. 59.10-12); Tzathios, the king of the Lazoi, wore royal garments on which there were images of Justin I (p. 168.23-26). It is worth noting that Malalas (p. 413.14-17) and the *Paschal Chronicle* (p. 614.2-5), which were Theophanes' sources for this episode, use another term, χαράκτις, engraved portrait. Theophanes, even when writing about events of the fifth century, allows himself to employ a less restricted use of the term: he discovers in his sources "Iconoclasts" even at that time. During a session of the Council of Nicaea II Theodore Anagnostes is quoted (Mansi 13, 180E-181B) as describing a certain Xenaias who rejected the veneration of icons of angels and of Christ. In the *Chronography* the story is elaborated somewhat: Theophanes relates that Xenaias-Philoxenos, a Persian, former slave and "the servant of Satan", instructed people to reject the icons of the Lord and of the saints (p. 134.11-12). The chronicler borrows from Anagnostes the story of a painter who dared to picture Christ in imitation of the image of Zeus; he was punished and then healed by the patriarch Gennadios (p. 112.29-32 from Anagnostes, p. 107.21-24; the story was cited by Damaskenos as well). Another painter, a Manichaean from Kyzikos, painted bogus icons of saints that caused a mutiny (p. 149.28-150.1; the story may have been adapted from Anagnostes, but there is no independent testimony). Theophanes relates (elaborating the version of George of Pisidia, *Herakleiad* I.218) that Herakleios came from Africa, with icons of the Mother of God hanging from the masts of his ships (p. 298.17-18). Again from George of Pisidia (*De exp. Pers.* I.139-51), Theophanes derives the story about the "made-not-by-hand" image of Christ which Herakleios carried with him on campaign against the Persians (p. 303.17-21). Theophanes refers to an "icon" representing the shameful death of the Arian Olympios (p. 142.14, from Anagnostes, p. 131-33), and to the icons of the patriarch Makedonios, which were taken down after he was removed from office (p. 155.27-28, from Anagnostes, p. 140.14-15). Clearly the theme of the icon attracted him.

Chronik des Theophanes, in F. WINKELMANN (ed.), *Volk und Herrschaft im frühen Byzanz*, Berlin 1991 [BBA 58], 94-108.

It has often been emphasized that Theophanes took special interest in events on the Oriental frontier of the empire, and it has been suggested that Theophanes drew on Oriental (primarily Syriac) sources for his description of these events, even though, as L. Conrad puts it, "the method by which these materials were transmitted to Theophanes is difficult to demonstrate conclusively."<sup>49</sup> The penetration of information concerning the Arabs into the *Chronography* becomes especially enigmatic if we assume that Theophanes relied heavily on the city-chronicle which, by its nature, was not much interested in events on the frontier of the empire. Moreover, if we assume (and this is a widely held opinion) that Theophanes, in the second half of the *Chronography*, used more or less the same sources as Nikephoros ("the divided dossier", or a different source), it becomes hard to understand why Theophanes should have given more attention to the Arab theme than the other historian. A simple quantitative comparison is sufficient to illustrate their difference in approach to the Arab theme. To designate the Arabs Nikephoros uses primarily the term Saracens (thirty-three times), supplemented also by the other ethnonym, Arabs (three times). In the second half of the *Chronography*, Theophanes employs the term Arabs no less than eighty-two times (the index of De Boor gives only selective references, which makes calculation arduous and hazardous), Saracens thirty-three times and Hagarenes (absent in Nikephoros) six times. The difference between the two historians is both quantitative (Theophanes uses the gentile names three times more than Nikephoros) and qualitative (his favorite term Ἀράβες is practically ignored by Nikephoros). It should be noted that in the last chapters of the *Chronography*, in which Theophanes narrates events that took place after those described by Nikephoros, the Arab theme is only infrequently touched upon: the emperor Nikephoros I's enemies were primarily Bulgarians, not Arabs.

Less evident than his interest in Iconoclasm and the Arab invasion is his attitude toward the urban centers of Byzantium. In the first place, his "urban terminology" reveals the change in Byzantine urbanistic perception that took place in the seventh and eighth centuries. For example, the term κάστρον, which appears only twice in the first half of the *Chronography*, becomes common in the second half; it is not used by Nikephoros, who prefers its equivalents πόλις and φρούριον. Further, Nikephoros employs the term *polis* more "broadly" than Theophanes, relating it both to the capital and provincial towns of the empire, whereas Theophanes applied this term primarily to Constantinople and secondly to some centers outside the empire, perceiving the Byzantine provincial centers (like his younger contemporary, the Arab geographer Ibn-Khurdadbeh) first and foremost as strongholds, *kastra*.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> L. CONRAD, Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: some Indications of Intercultural Transmission, *ByzF* 15, 1990, 43. Cf. P. SPECK, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer Fremden und der Versuch seiner eigenen Herrschaft. Quellenkritische Darstellung von 25 Jahren byzantinischer Geschichte nach dem ersten Ikonoklasmus*, Munich 1978, 391.

<sup>50</sup> An undoubted merit of Čičurov's monograph is that it emphasizes the individual features of the *Chronography* and in particular, the difference in the treatment of geographical space between

Theophanes was a historian. He described many events which it was impossible for him to have witnessed personally, and thus he turned to sources. We know his sources for the first part of the *Chronography* (most of them have survived); we are not in such a fortunate position when it comes to the second part of the work. He had only meager information for the decades after Herakleios<sup>51</sup> (as had so many contemporary chroniclers), and we are forced to hypothesize non-extant Greek and Syriac texts which he could have used for the seventh and eighth centuries. On the other hand, we may conjecture that Theophanes (and Nikephoros) relied upon an elaborate oral tradition, their memory (and that of the people in their circle) being stronger than we usually imagine. But fortunately we are not investigating here the scholarly methods of Theophanes. Whatever his sources, he wrote a literary text,<sup>52</sup> and to do this he selected from his sources those materials and words he deemed fit for his purpose.

#### D. Composition, characters and wording

Structurally any chronicle is a more complicated work than a *martyrion* or *vita*. It encompasses a substantial length of time (the *Chronography* describes the period from 284 to 813) and is not framed by a clearly defined unity of space. Theophanes deals with the Arab Caliphate, the Franks, the northern shore of the Black Sea, and so on. Naturally, he was conscious of the problem of composition, of how to organize the material he found in the available sources.

Theophanes relates historical facts in chronological sequence, while his main predecessors of the sixth and seventh centuries (Prokopios, Theophylaktos Simokatta, George of Pisidia), whom he knew and drew from, chose to organize their material thematically. Thus Theophanes had to rearrange their compositions or to place under a single year affairs which occurred over a longer period of time.<sup>53</sup> Theophanes could find the chronological principle of composition already in the historical work of Malalas and in the anonymous *Paschal Chronicle*, in both of which the formula "in this year" or "in this indict" is common. Rochov showed, however, that on several occasions Theophanes adds

the *Chronography* and the *Concise History*. Our examination of the texts revealed different figures, but here is not the place to discuss this difference.

<sup>51</sup> A. S. PROUDFOOT, The Sources of Theophanes for the Herakleian Dynasty, *Byzantion* 44, 1974/5, 367-439.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Ja. LJUBARSKII, Concerning the Literary Technique of Theophanes the Confessor, *BS* 56/2, 1995, 317-322.

<sup>53</sup> See examples in LJUBARSKII, Feofan Ispovednik, 73, 79.

datings which were missing in Malalas, or actually changed Malalas' datings, and placed some events in a different order to that of his predecessor.<sup>54</sup>

Theophanes seldom deviates from the principle of chronological composition. One such deviation occurs when he digresses on Muhammad, beginning with the stereotyped formula, "In this year, Muhammad, the leader of the Saracens and the false prophet, died" (p. 333.1-2). Following this there is a flashback: Theophanes returns to Muhammad's mission (the Jews, he says, accepted him as the promised messiah), presents his genealogy and narrates his biography. Breaking his general working principle, Theophanes gives in this excursus a separate concise chronology of Muhammad's life: he spent ten years in hiding, ten years in wars, and the last nine years of his life in the open (p. 334.19-20). Another excursus is devoted to Bulgarian antiquities. It starts with a common formula: "In this year the Bulgarians made inroads into Thrace"; thereafter follows the introductory phrase for a digression: "It is necessary to tell about the antiquities of the Huno-goundouroi, Bulgarians and Kotragoi (Koutrigurs)" (p. 356.19-20). And then follows the digression itself—ranging from the fish in the rivers Tanais and Atel to the defeat of Constantine IV by Asparuch and the peace treaty.

The text of the *Chronography* consists primarily of "annual units", whose lemmata usually indicate the year from the Creation, the year from the Incarnation, and even the years of the reigning emperor, those of some foreign rulers (Persian, Arab) and of the episcopates of patriarchs. Theophanes, however, does not share George Synkellos' obsession with establishing chronological sequence scientifically, nor does he debate with his predecessors, querying, for example, the dates of events. There are serious doubts in fact, whether various dates he accepts are in keeping with reality.<sup>55</sup>

Individual entries are regularly composed of several passages whose role (*fonctionnalité* in the terminology of R. Barthes) is purely chronological; the passages are linked together only by *consécution*, not *conséquence*. Thus the entry for the year 5870 (from the Creation) begins with the Goths' attack on Scythia, Moesia and neighboring regions (p. 64.34-65.3), followed by stories about armed men who appeared in clouds, about a baby born in Antioch who had a single eye in the middle of its brow, four arms, four legs and a beard, about the emperor Valens who returned to Constantinople from

<sup>54</sup> I. ROCHOV, Malalas bei Theophanes, *Klio* 65, 1983, 472 n. 25-26, 473 n. 34.

<sup>55</sup> An attempt to explain and justify Theophanes' chronology made by G. OSTROGORSKY, Die Chronologie des Theophanes im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert, *BNJbb* 7, 1928/9, 1-56; on the other hand, D. OLSTER, Syriac Sources, Greek Sources, and Theophanes' Lost Year, *ByzF* 19, 1993, 228, states: "An exact chronology was not his literary priority." Cf. I. ROCHOV, Zu einigen chronologischen Irrtümern 'Chronographie' des Theophanes, in J. HERRMAN-H. KÖPSTEIN-R. MÜLLER (eds.), *Griechenland-Byzanz-Europa*, Berlin 1985 [BBA 52], 43-49; W. TREADGOLD, Seven Byzantine Revolutions and the Chronology of Theophanes, *GRBS* 31, 1990, 203-227 and ID., The Missing Year in the Revolt of Artabasdos, *JÖB* 42, 1992, 87-93; P. SPECK, Das letzte Jahr des Artabasdos, *JÖB* 45, 1995, 37-52. See also, MANGO, Introduction to ID.-SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor*, lxiii-lxxiv.

Antioch, was harangued by the citizens and begged by St. Isaac to reject Arianism. There then follows the story of the Goths who defeated Valens and poured into the suburbs of Constantinople, and that of the acclamation of Theodosios I, interrupted by a reference to the *patrikios* Trajanos who believed that "Goths" was the local name for the Scythians. The entry is completed with an account of the acts of the Arians in Alexandria, who delivered Dorotheos to wild beasts (p. 66.4-5). Another entry also begins with a chronological definition, "The same year, September of the fourth indiction" (p. 470.5-6), followed by several independent items: Constantine VI's marriage with Theodote, earthquakes on Crete and in Constantinople, relations with the Bulgarian khan Kardam, and the Arab raid against Amorion.

This annalistic composition<sup>56</sup> may seem patchy, but in fact it reflects a new philosophy of history: the causation of events is beyond our understanding, it is more profound than human reasoning, which can contemplate only surface connections. Time is "logical" in itself, and the narrator has to do nothing more than to follow its unceasing flow. Given this philosophical standpoint, Theophanes encounters the situation which some of his predecessors in the seventh and eighth centuries had to tackle, namely, the situation we have called "monotony." If divine causation of historical events is incomprehensible and the human mind unable to organize material on a thematic ("subject-matter") basis (such as the Vandal wars in Prokopios or Herakleios' Persian expedition in George of Pisidia) the tale becomes indivisible, deprived of parts and bounds; it has a beginning (the Creation of the world), but no logical end. The historian stops at the point he reaches before dying, and the continuator joins him, without knowing where he, in turn, will stop. Theophanes' preamble is not a confession of his dependence on George Synkellos; rather, it is the announcement of the new perception of the incessant pace of history which was to continue until the Second Coming of Christ. Having reached this point (the monotony of the incessant flow of time) the writer clashed with the philosopher ("scientist"), Theophanes with George Synkellos, a clash demonstrated by the fact that George avoided dramatic episodes in his digressions, whereas Theophanes time and again interrupts monotonous narration with short stories.<sup>57</sup>

The point where the two chronicles converge is the reign of Diocletian, as stated both in the lemma to the *Select Chronography* of Synkellos and in Theophanes' preface. Synkellos' account of Diocletian is condensed into four lines: "When Diocletian took power he immediately executed the eparch Apeiros, the murderer of Numerianus, [then] marched to Rome and killed Carinus who had unjustly used the power; he ruled 20 years, and through all that time the Romans considered him the best" (p. 472.22-26). Then follows the slaying of four bishops and an extract from Eusebios about Paul of Samosata.

<sup>56</sup> On Theophanes' "annalistic composition" see MAISANO as above n. 35.

<sup>57</sup> On Theophanes' "narrativity" see Ja. LJUBARSKI, *Sjužetnoe povestvovanie v vizantijskoj hronistike, Vizantijskie Očerki*, Moscow 1996, 43-46. Cf. ID., *Problema evoljucii vizantijskoj istoriografii, Literatura i iskusstvo v sisteme kul'tury*, Moscow 1988, 39-45.

We shall avoid here discussion of the epithet ἄριστος, "the best", applied to Diocletian, the emperor who in Byzantine tradition was the prime example of the anti-Christian persecutor. By George Synkellos' time, not only was the *Paschal Chronicle* available, devoting to Diocletian what now fills seven pages in the Bonn edition (p. 510.18-517.5), but also dozens of stories about the executions of martyrs perpetrated by Diocletian and his hangers-on. Theophanes speaks of Diocletian's "great and most horrible persecutions" (p. 7.15-16), and describes him as "crude" (p. 10.25) and an "evil tyrant" (p. 448.27). But George did not care to portray Diocletian, just as he did not portray Diocletian's predecessors. Theophanes begins the *Chronography* with ten entries on Diocletian, and in the eleventh he notes: "This year Diocletian and Maximian Herculus, having lost their senses, resigned imperial authority and put on the garb of private citizens" (p. 10.11-12, a statement which is repeated, some lines later, with a reference to Eusebios, p. 11.13-15). Then begins the story of Theophanes' favorite, Constantine the Great, the son of Helena (p. 11.1-2). Unlike the scanty note by Synkellos on Diocletian, Theophanes' portrait of Constantine<sup>58</sup> is presented in detail and includes not only elements taken from Eusebios and other ecclesiastical historians, but possibly also from the (oral?) legend of Constantine (to this legend belongs, among other things, the tale of Constantine's baptism in Rome by pope Silvester, which is introduced by the clause "as some people say" [p. 17.24-28], and the mention of the life-giving cross that provided victories over the Germanic tribes, Sarmatians and Goths [p. 27.31-28.2]). Some of these legendary tales Theophanes may have borrowed from Alexander the Monk's treatise *On the Cross*, for instance the story of how "Maximian" (Maximin Daia), defeated by Constantine, took off his imperial vestments and dressed in military attire (Alexander says even that he went "naked"), and began traveling from village to village, executing pagan priests who falsely promised him victory; his death is then described in "naturalistic" detail (p. 15.11-15, 21-26, from PG 87, 4056CD).

George Synkellos employed digressions in the form of long scholarly topical quotations from his sources. Theophanes, on the other hand, digresses in historical "episodes" that are incorporated into the annalistic framework discussed above. These episodic units, whose roots lie in late antique narrative sources, are common not only in the first part of the *Chronography*, but in the second part as well. Thus, after a series of short entries Theophanes composes a novelette about the *stratelates* Sergios and the *koubikoularios* Andrew. The novelette begins, as almost every unit in the *Chronography*, with the formula "In this year" (the last year of Constans II [641-68]), after which Theophanes postulates that the *strategos* of Armeniakon, Saborios (Shapur, a Persian by descent), revolted against the emperor Konstas (Constans II) and dispatched the *stratelates* Sergios to the caliph Muawiya (661-80) vowing to support Muawiya if he launched a war

<sup>58</sup> See R. SCOTT, *The Later Image of Constantine in Byzantine Chronicles, Byzantine Studies in Australia. Newsletter* 10, 1982, 17f.

against Byzantium. Immediately Constantine IV, "the son of the emperor [Constans]", sent his representative, the *koubikoularios* Andrew, to Damascus. After this annalistic statement Theophanes paints a scene interspersed with lively dialogue. Andrew entered the hall in Damascus where Sergios was sitting with Muawiya, and Sergios, on seeing Andrew, got up to salute him. Muawiya scolded the rebel for being cowardly, and Sergios tried to make an excuse by referring to custom. The two Byzantines bargained with Muawiya, and finally the messenger of Shapur won, having promised to pay "taxes" to the caliph. Following these negotiations the "barbarian" troops marched to assist Shapur, but Andrew trapped Sergios and executed him. Later on Shapur perished at Adrianople (in Bithynia) when his horse bolted and Shapur hit his head on the city gate; "God," concludes Theophanes, "gave victory to the emperor." He adds, finally, that during the winter, when the snow was heavy, Andrew, at night, seized Amorion and slaughtered the entire Arab garrison (p. 349-351).

There are other "episodic units" in the second section of the *Chronography*, such as the story of Leontios' enthroning in 695 (p. 368.15-369.30) and the oath and the coronation of Constantine VI in 780 (p. 449.12-450.23). These novelettes include "naturalistic" details and direct speech, and are completely different from George Synkellos' scientific prose.

One of the most attractive "episodic units" is the tale about Justinian II's return to power in 705 (a parallel discourse is to be found in the *Chronicle* by Nikephoros, par. 42). The tale contains numerous details: the *chagan* of Chazaria married his sister Theodora to Justinian; when the *chagan* decided to kill him Justinian fled to Tomis; the Bulgarian khan Tervel supported him, and so it goes on. Many items of this tale are nothing other than wayward elements typical of hagiographical narratives: Theophanes describes, using the vocabulary of *martyria* (p. 375.4-9, 13-14), how Justinian tormented and executed his enemies in Constantinople, and he even puts in the mouth of the throng a quotation from Ps. 90.13, "You step on the asp and basilisk and trample the lion [an allusion to the emperor Leontios?] and dragon" (l. 10-12). This line from the Psalter is frequently found in hagiographical texts. Justinian's courtier Myakes is said to have entreated him not to punish his adversaries if God should give him back his kingdom. Justinian retorted, "If I spare a single one, may God drown me on the spot," yet despite his cruel answer he escaped the storm (p. 373.23-28) —again a hagiographical stereotype. Then Theophanes turns to the theme of prediction typical of saints' *vitae*. Justinian appointed as patriarch a certain recluse, Kyros, since the man predicted the emperor's restoration to the throne (375.14-16). The theme is reintroduced at the end of the episode when the historian relates how another recluse, a heretic able to foresee events (*προορατικός*), predicted the enthroning of Philippikos-Bardanes (p. 381.7-8). Theophanes' imagination seems to have been swept up by the net of stereotypes, despite the obviously unholy character of the protagonist of the tale. None of these hagiographical elements appears in Nikephoros' account of the events.

Theophanes includes in his narrative "direct" hagiographical stories, for instance Constans II's reprisals against Maximos the Confessor (p. 347.7-14) and Pope Martin (p.

351.16-24), or Constantine V's execution of Stephen the Younger (p. 436.27-437.7, repeated in an abbreviated form p. 443.14-18). In the tale about Justinian II these hagiographical accessoires are used to characterize the actions of an evil person, and they take on the colour of an unrealized parody. The pseudo-hagiographical element emerges as well at the end of the account of the reign of Maurice: to the story of the murder of the emperor's children as reported by Theophylaktos Simokatta, Theophanes adds (referring to unnamed narrators) that from the corpse of the last slaughtered child milk gushed together with blood, so that everybody who witnessed the scene cried in sorrow (p. 290.8-10). Milk gushing with blood from the wounds of a martyr is clearly a hagiographical stereotype. Theophanes is far from treating Justinian as a saint, and the saintly vocabulary only underscores the insanity of the emperor's behavior. Even in the case of Maurice's children the use of hagiographical stereotypes seems slightly out of place. In chapter 7 (below, p. 295-313) we shall return to this problem while discussing other discourses of the ninth century distorting stereotypes.

The *Chronography* is the history of the deterioration of the imperial power from Constantine the Great to Nikephoros "the Evil", and it is natural that its protagonists are emperors of Constantinople. One of the rulers most hated by Theophanes is the Iconoclastic *basileus* Constantine V, the "tyrant" (p. 441.6), enemy of the Church (p. 440.4) and of the Virgin (p. 448.4), mad and impious (p. 436.27), precursor of the Antichrist (p. 400.1), utterly abominable (p. 413.26). Theophanes piles up epithets of revulsion, but he gives very few concrete details about Constantine's repulsive activity apart from his Iconoclasm and persecution of monks, supplemented by the emperor's involvement in magic and demonology (p. 413.22-24). Theophanes had difficulty with his negative characterization of Constantine's policy. For example, the "tyrant" was successful in his wars: together with his father, Leo III, he routed the Arabs at Akroinon (p. 411.21-23); he seized Theodosiupolis and Melitene, and took captive [many] Armenians (p. 427.15-16); he subjugated Sklavini in Macedonia (p. 430.21-22). Theophanes becomes particularly eloquent when describing Constantine's victories in Bulgaria, including the battle of Anchialos (p. 432.29-433.10) and the invasion of Lithosoria (p. 447.19-26). K. N. Uspenskij even suggested that the historian had at his disposal a pro-Iconoclast source which he followed despite his general Iconodulic sentiments,<sup>59</sup> but probably Theophanes' position can be explained without the *deus ex machina* of a lost source. He wrote the *Chronography* at a time when the country was shaken by the Bulgarian victory over Nikephoros I, and Theophanes himself relates that some "lawless" people eulogized Constantine "the

<sup>59</sup> K. N. USPENSKIJ, Očerki po istorii ikonoborčeskogo dviženija v Vizantijskoj imperii v VIII-IX vv. Feofan i ego hronografija, *VizVrem* 3, 1950, 393-438 and 4, 1951, 211-262. See objections of G. OSTROGORSKY, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates*, Munich 1963, 123 n. 1. HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 338, however, accepts the existence of "eine ikonoklasten-freundliche Quelle" because Theophanes calls Leo III "pious emperor" (Theoph., 396.8).

abhorred by God (θεοβδέλνκτος, a specific word of Theophanes? See also p. 390.31) and thrice-unhappy” for his success in the wars against the Bulgarians (p. 496.14-16); the people even hollowed out his grave and jumped inside calling not God but Constantine to come to the aid of the imperiled state (p. 501.6-12). The conjuncture of events was such that the historian was unable to silence the “tyrant’s” military achievements. But Theophanes did try to denigrate the image of the victorious *basileus*, to ridicule him. He begins in the usual way with a standard annalistic statement: “This year, to the impious emperor Leo the even more impious son Constantine was born.” He supplies a note on the empress Maria who is called efficacious (ἐμπράκτος, p. 400.3 and once more below, l. 15). And then comes the story about Constantine’s baptism when the horrible infant defecated in the holy font; Theophanes refers to trustworthy eyewitnesses who stood by and allegedly witnessed the patriarch Germanos predict on this occasion that Constantine would cause “a great predicament” for the Christian Church (p. 399.28-400.13). Theophanes did not know yet the contemptuous sobriquet *Kopronymos* imposed on Constantine by later generations, but the legend about the defecation scene is something he either had heard about or invented.

Later on, having described Constantine’s cruel treatment of Iconodules who were hanged, dragged through the streets of Constantinople, blinded, mutilated and flogged, Theophanes concludes the description with a contemptuous comment: “[Constantine], however, luxuriated in music and banquets and entertained his courtiers with obscenity and dances” (p. 442.28-29). The theme of the nether region of the body and of physical delight prepares the ground for an apparent volte-face: yes, Constantine won “a great victory” over the Bulgarians; he then returned to Constantinople, with booty and captives, arranged a triumphal procession and proclaimed the war noble, “since he met no resistance and there was neither slaughter nor bloodshed” (p. 447.23-26). But the irony is evident: the great warrior, for whose assistance Theophanes’ contemporaries prayed in their impiety, happened to be successful when the enemy did not resist him. And in order to reinforce the ironical sense of the episode Theophanes attached here to Constantine the same epithet ἐμπράκτος that had encased the shameful scene of the prince’s defecation in the font.

The equivocal approach to the image of Constantine V reveals itself not only in the acknowledgement of his military success. Theophanes also describes his works in Constantinople, such as the restoration of the aqueduct demolished by the Avars. For the restoration work, he says, the emperor gathered numerous craftsmen from around the empire (p. 440.17-24). Theophanes indicates their professions, their places of origin, and their exact numbers and also notes that the emperor assigned *archontes* to supervise them. The restoration was a great achievement and the passage ends with the statement: “On the completion of the work, water ran into the city.” Though there is no direct lexical coincidence (except the main verbs συνήγαγεν and ἤγαγεν) between the two stories, Theophanes has employed a Biblical passage as his source, Solomon’s construction of the

Temple: “He engaged seventy-thousand men (i.e. laborers) and eighty-thousand quarrymen on the mountain and three-thousand six-hundred men to superintend them” (II *Chron.* 2.2). The structure of both passages is identical. Theophanes’ account, however, contrasts markedly with the version of the patriarch Nikephoros who mentions neither numbers, professions, or supervisors, but simply states that Constantine collected “a great number of artisans skilled in construction” (par. 85.8-10). Theophanes, unlike Nikephoros, intentionally created a parallel between the hated Constantine and the wise Solomon.

The complexity of Constantine V’s image is not limited to its dichotomy (tyrant on one hand and warrior/builder on the other) nor to the ironical resolution of this dichotomy. Theophanes also attempts to depict his loathed protagonist in motion and development. Constantine is the archenemy of icon veneration, but he has evolved in his animosity toward “the Church and Orthodoxy”; his first *silentia* against the holy images, says Theophanes, paved the way for his future absolute impiety (p. 427.19-24); only later did he and his partisans make manifest their inglorious heresy (p. 428.8-9).

The double image of Constantine VI and his mother Irene in the *Chronography* is very complex and contradictory. Irene restored the veneration of icons, and therefore is called by Theophanes most pious (p. 454.6, 475.28, 476.5), courageous and intelligent (p. 478.2); nevertheless, the chronicler narrates how cruel she was in the first year of her reign (p. 454.20, 454.31-455.1), declares her anxious to obtain imperial power (p. 464.15-16), and describes how she conspired against her son Constantine VI and ordered that he be blinded. Even the sun was obscured for seventeen days, no rays penetrated to the earth, and everybody agreed that it was because of the blinding of the emperor (p. 472.18-22). This ambiguous depiction of Irene sheds some light on the enigmatic words παραδόξως θεόθεν (p. 454.6-7) which characterize the empress’ ascension to the throne in the *Chronography*: on the one hand, she received her power from God, whose will and purposes are beyond human understanding; on the other, it was a “strange” occurrence (however this can be interpreted).<sup>60</sup>

In passing, Theophanes touches on the physical qualities of Constantine VI: at twenty he was strong and good at everything (p. 464.18). The young prince shares with Irene the merit of restoring icon worship (p. 454.6-12), of signing the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (p. 463.8-9), and of renovating the shrine of St. Euphemia (p. 440.2-3). But his military actions proved to be failures: the Bulgarians defeated him at Markellai (p. 467.29-33), and he fled from the Arabs (p. 472.1-2). The story of Constantine’s divorce is presented without passion: Theophanes only states that the emperor hated his wife Maria and urged her to go to nunnery (p. 469.23-26). After a few words on military actions, there follows a brief phrase saying that the emperor “lawlessly” became engaged to Theodote, the *koubikoularea* of the empress Maria (p. 470.1-3). Theophanes returns to Constantine’s

<sup>60</sup> D. MISIOU, ‘Η Ειρήνη και τὸ ‘παραδόξως’ τοῦ Θεοφάνη, *Byzantina* 10, 1980, 169-177, suggested a simpler interpretation of the word παραδόξως “miraculously”. But what was miraculous in her succeeding a deceased spouse?



second marriage, once more relating that Platon, *hegoumenos* of the Sakkoudion monastery, broke off communications with the patriarch Tarasios, who accepted the new marriage, and with Joseph, *hegoumenos* of the Kathara monastery, who celebrated the marriage. The angry emperor punished the monks of Sakkoudion (p. 470.24-471.5). While recognizing that the marriage is "lawless", Theophanes is far from adopting the irreconcilable position of Platon and Platon's nephew Theodore of Stoudios, who was Theophanes' close friend.

The mother and the son are not presented in black and white only; although Theophanes disapproves of some of their actions, he does not apply to them the peremptory tone reserved for Nikephoros I. They were not ideal people, but they were not categorically bad either.

Minor figures rarely become the subject of elaborate characterization. Some of them are borrowed from Theophanes' sources, especially Prokopios, as for instance in the case of Gelimer (p. 187.28-188.1), or have a hagiographical colour, such as the portrayal of the blessed patriarch Germanos (p. 406.25-31, 407.16-409.21), reminding one of the [later?] *Vita of Germanos*. More arresting are Theophanes' attempts to picture some of his characters not only by using indiscriminate labels (such as "unintelligent, difficult and incontinent" [p. 135.35] or "manly and arrogant" [p. 102.15-16]), but also by means of describing their actions. Using an image borrowed from the Biblical Samson, Theophanes narrates how the pope Vigilius was dragged from his asylum; he grabbed the pillars supporting the altar and turned them over, since he was big and heavy (p. 225.23-24). Although Theophanes based his tale of Vigilius' stay in Constantinople on Malalas' account (p. 485.4-7), this vivid episode is absent in his predecessor. The characterization of the Monophysite Severus of Antioch (p. 157.30-34) is thought to have been taken from Theodore Anagnostes (p. 143.21-23), but in fact it is conjecturally restored to the edited text of Theodore only on the basis of Theophanes. In this passage the chronicler relates that the Orthodox (particularly the monks) had avoided communion with Severos who took revenge on them using the crowd of villagers: they murdered many people, overturned their altars, and melted the holy vessels of the Orthodox. The portrayal is significant not only because Severus and his allies are presented in action, but also because his actions are similar, in microcosm, to the Iconoclastic persecutions described in the second half of the book. If Theophanes was not following Anagnostes in this passage, it is possible that he used his personal anti-Iconoclastic experience to outline the behavior of the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch.

Theophanes' phrase structure is usually simple and dense. Like George Synkellos he uses copiously verbs and participles, avoiding epithets and rhetorical embellishment. As in the case of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* this is not due to a lack of education, but to a conscious choice of style. When he wanted Theophanes could be rhetorical. For example, he records the speech of John of Cappadocia who begged the emperor to consider, before declaring war on the Vandals, the length of the journey, the expanse of the sea (in the original: τὰ τῆς θαλάσσης πελάγη), the uncertainty of victory, the anguish of defeat, the

futility of regret (p. 188.20-23). The sentence is constructed of periods (*isokola*) interrupted only once by an unbalanced statement "a distance of 140 days by land." The passage is borrowed from Prokopios, *Wars* 3, 10.8-17, although Prokopios has no periodic construction. Moreover, Theophanes omits Prokopios' stress on the uncertain outcome of the conflict, "that is in the lap of the god," a phrase that could easily have been adjusted to the needs of a Christian interpretation of warfare.

Another passage demonstrates that Theophanes could employ the complicated, perhaps even overly complicated, play on words that Byzantines enjoyed so much. He relates how the emperor Constans II, before a naval battle, dreamed that he dwelt in Thessalonike. A dream-interpreter gave a "lexicological" explanation of the name of the city, as θὲς ἄλλω νίκην, that is, "the enemy will gain victory" (p. 346.1-6). And as it turned out, the Byzantines were routed. The pun thus acquires "material power".

It was long ago observed that Theophanes (like Malalas before him) holds a special place in the history of the Greek language, between the vernacular and the "fossilized" Byzantine Greek.<sup>61</sup> In the words of H. Hunger, Theophanes employed the *Umgangssprache* to an even higher degree than Malalas with regard to both ethnonyms and toponyms and terms for political and ecclesiastical concepts.<sup>62</sup> I. Rochov has noted many examples of words used by Theophanes which are not to be found in preceding works or are found with a different meaning; she thinks (but gives no figures) that this vernacular vocabulary is more characteristic of the second half of the *Chronography*,<sup>63</sup> in which the historian was freer from established sources. But even in the previous sections, such as those on Maurice or Herakleios, expressions of this kind can be found.<sup>64</sup>

The *Chronography* encompasses the events of five centuries. It goes without saying that Theophanes has used sources, applying the technique of "scissors and paste". However, he did not perform this task mechanically (although there are repetitions and contradictions in his voluminous work), he had strong political views — *Tendenz*, as P. Speck calls it— and he restructured his sources in accordance with his views. But he was certainly a writer, and as such he may be classed a ninth-century "modernist", an innovator.

Above all, Theophanes revived the writing of history after the barren Dark Century. Unquestionably, he had predecessors (primarily George Synkellos and possibly anony-

<sup>61</sup> KRUMBACHER, *GBL*, 344. On Theophanes' grammar see D. TABACHOVITZ, *Sprachliche und textkritische Studien zur Chronik des Theophanes Confessor*, Uppsala 1926. Theophanes used numerous Latin words, probably more extensively than his successors; see P. YANNOPOULOS, *Les éléments latins dans la Chronique de Théophane, Boukaleia: Mélanges offerts à B. Bouvier*, Geneva 1995, 103-122.

<sup>62</sup> HUNGER, *Lit.* 1, 338.

<sup>63</sup> I. ROCHOV, *Beiträge zur Chronik des Theophanes zum mittelhellenischen Wortschatz*, *Klio* 69, 1987, 567-572.

<sup>64</sup> See, for instance, H. MIHĂESCU, *Torna, torna, fratre*, *Byzantina* 8, 1976, 21-35; V. BEŠEVLEV, *Die volkssprachlichen Elemente in den Redepartien bei Theophanes und in den Akklamationen bei Konstantin Porphyrogennetos*, in J. IRMSCHER (ed.), *Byzantinische Beiträge*, Berlin 1964, 141-144.



mous authors of short chronicles) and contemporaries, but unlike George, who produced scientific prose, Theophanes saw his task as the creation of a work of literature. George had filled his *Select Chronography* with chronological lists, long quotations from authorities and short comments, frequently polemical in nature. Apparently, Theophanes did not follow the same "scientific" manner of presentation.

Secondly, Theophanes is not only a historian; he is also a medieval annalist. While he did not invent annalistic principles, he is more consistent in their realization than Malalas or the anonymous author of the *Paschal Chronicle*. Time is the main organizational force in the *Chronography*, even though in some cases this is a fictitious chronological web, allegedly based on different chronological calculations. Time is not only an instrument of formal organization of events. Historical development does have its own intrinsic logic — not the Christian logic of George Synkellos, moving from the sinful Adam to Christ the Savior and to the triumph of Christianity (that had to follow after Diocletian), but the pessimistic logic-decay of the Christian state founded by Constantine that collapsed into Iconoclasm, into the lawlessness of Nikephoros and into the military humiliation at the hands of the Arabs and Bulgarians.

Thirdly, Theophanes focused on two important themes that were practically ignored in the literary texts of the eighth century: the Arab threat and the veneration of icons. The two Stephen-hagiographers were immediate predecessors of Theophanes, but it was in his *Chronography* that both topics found their full treatment and their just place in the teleological process.

By introducing time as the organizing principle Theophanes dealt with the problem of monotony, of the topically indistinguishable ("incessant") flow of units (entries). He managed to surpass this hurdle. Having broken with the tradition of George Synkellos, he relied heavily upon the use of episodes. We have seen that the author of the *Barlaam Romance* inserted a few parables in order to interrupt the monotony of his narration; Theophanes applies this device much more regularly. In the *Chronography*, short Synkellos-style "unadorned" entries are interspersed with "episodic units" which have not only an instructive function, but also entertain.

In the works of the eighth century, both prose and verse, the "hymnographic" style was predominant; the language was lofty, with only a few attempts (such as those of the author of the *Miracles of St. Artemios*) to approach the spoken idiom. It was Theophanes who moved closer to the vernacular, not only by building simpler, non-periodic constructions, but also by using more widely non-classical names and words.

Theophanes heralds a new stage in the development of Byzantine literature. He was proclaimed saint and was praised as a historian. But the irony of the story is that his work found no real continuation: annalistic historiography did not become fully grafted onto Greek literary culture.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MONKS AND SOCIETY: THEODORE OF STOUDIOS

#### *A. Biography and political stance (BHG 1754-1759m)*

Theodore of Stoudios, a saint of the Byzantine church, was a leading politician and theologian at the turn of the eighth and the early decades of the ninth centuries. The earliest eulogy for Theodore is in an encyclical letter sent by his pupil Naukratios announcing the saint's death to the Stoudite monks who had been dispersed by the Iconoclastic persecutions (PG 99, 1825-1849). In 844 or soon afterward, an anonymous speech on the *translatio* of the relics of Theodore and his brother Joseph of Thessalonike was delivered.<sup>1</sup> Three biographies of Theodore have been published, the fourth (preserved in cod. Monac. gr. 467) remains in manuscript.<sup>2</sup> They are all very close to each other, forming versions of the same work rather than individual texts. It is usually assumed that the *Vita* by the otherwise unknown Michael the Monk<sup>3</sup> is the closest to the lost (?) original, and that the other versions depend on it. The *terminus post quem* of the *Vita* by Michael is 868, since it speaks of the Stoudite Nicholas (d. 868) as blessed (μακαρίτης) (col. 296C), a term that usually (though not always) designates someone who has recently died. The mention of Gregory of Syracuse, whose pupils are said to have ridiculed Theodore's hymns

<sup>1</sup> Ch. VAN DE VORST, La translation de s. Théodore Studite et de s. Joseph de Thessalonique, *AB* 32, 1913, 27-62.

<sup>2</sup> V. LATYŠEV, Žitie prep. Feodora Studita v mjunhenskoj rukopisi No. 467, *Viz Vrem* 21, 1914, 222-254.

<sup>3</sup> PG 99, 233-328. Several hagiographical discourses (*enkomia*), mostly unpublished, survived under the name of Michael the Monk; see T. MATANTSEVA, Éloge des archanges Michel et Gabriel par Michel le moine, *JÖB* 46, 1996, 97-155. It is impossible to establish any details concerning the figure and life of Michael the Monk.

(col. 312C-313B), suggests the same date; if the man is Gregory Asbestas, archbishop of Syracuse (d. after 861), the date of this *Vita* must be no earlier than the 860s, since the hagiographer tells of the journey of these pupils to Sardinia after their teacher's death. The *terminus ante quem* of Michael the Monk's activity cannot be established; Michael asserts (col. 233BC) that he was aware of numerous biographies of Theodore, the earliest of them summarizing (κεφαλαιώσαντες) his life in a few words, whereas some lengthy enkomia appeared later. It has been suggested that the author of one of the surviving versions was Theodore Daphnopates (col. 113, n. 1), a writer, politician and Stoudite monk of the mid-tenth century. Several later eulogies are known as well, including an iambic poem of the twelfth century by Stephen Meles.

If we know Theodore's biography better than those of his predecessors and contemporaries,<sup>4</sup> this is due not only to the *Vita* by Michael (and its derivatives), which contains many details and shows a tendency to indicate dates and precise figures, but also to Theodore's own works, particularly his correspondence.

Theodore was born in 759 in Constantinople to a family of "eupatrids". His father, Photeinos, was a high-ranking financial official in the government of Constantine V "Kopronymos", and his maternal uncle Platon, trained as a notary, served as *zygostates* (comptroller?) "of imperial moneys" and in this office amassed a substantial fortune (col. 808BC). A relative (cousin?) of Theodore, Theodote, became later *koubikoularea* of Constantine VI's first wife Maria, had an affair with the emperor and replaced Maria as empress. Theodore's mother Theoktiste exercised considerable influence on the future saint, and Theodore makes mention of her and her brother Platon more frequently than of his father. There was probably a dispute within the family; at any rate, we are told that Photeinos abstained, for five years, from intimate relations with his spouse (col. 236D), the hagiographer explaining that he did so "on account of his piety." Theodore himself touches upon this episode in the panegyric of his mother (col. 885D-888A); according to him, however, the idea of abstinence originated with Theoktiste rather than her husband. She constantly talked to him about the inevitability of death and suggested the separation; they slept, he continues, five years in the same bed without sexual intercourse. Theoktiste was not a sociable character; her son narrates that she, when invited to wedding parties, withdrew from the company, neither touching the meal nor looking at "theatrical shows" (col. 885C). We should not forget, too, that Photeinos served the most Iconoclastic emperor, whereas his brother-in-law Platon was (at any rate later) a devoted Iconodule. Platon had turned just twenty-four when he left Constantinople for the monastery of Symboloi on Bithynian Olympos. As far as Photeinos is concerned his son's hagiographer only notes in a vague manner that he viewed his office with contempt. He did not suffer

<sup>4</sup> See firstly A. P. DOBROKLONSKIJ, *Prep. Feodor, ispovednik i igumen Studijskij*, 2 vols, Odessa 1913-14; cf. V. BOŽIDAR, *St. Theodore the Studite*, Toronto 1985; FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 3\*-20\*; Ch. FRAZE, *St Theodore of Stoudios and Ninth Century Monasticism in Constantinople*, *Studi monastici* 23, 1981, 27-58.

from the Iconoclastic persecutions, and when eventually he retired to a monastery, several years after Constantine V's death, the family, in Theodore's words, still belonged to the milieu of well-to-do imperial financial functionaries (col. 889C).

According to the hagiographer, at the age of seven Theodore was sent to elementary school; later he studied grammar, dialectic (specified by Michael as philosophy) and rhetoric (col. 237AB). The author of another *Vita* elaborates on the theme of Theodore's education (col. 117C-120A) stressing that the saint employed his knowledge and skill for good purposes and not for outlandish *antirrheses* (is he alluding to Constantine V's *Peuseis* or perhaps to Theodore's own *Antirrheses*? Cf. col. 120A, a likely reference to Theodore's *Problemata*). But all this information may be no more than hagiographical stereotype: in the panegyric for Theoktiste, Theodore says that it was his mother who instructed him in Holy Scripture as well as alms-giving and piety (col. 888B).

Several years after Constantine V's death (probably in 781), Theodore's family (including Photeinos) joined Platon in his monastic retreat in Bithynia; later on, they moved to the newly founded monastery of Sakkoudion built on the family estate of Boskytion, near Prousa.<sup>5</sup> Here Theodore was elected *hegoumēnos* in 794, at the age of just thirty-five. The Arab raid of 798/9 compelled Theodore to move from Sakkoudion to the Constantinopolitan monastery of Stoudios. G. Fatouros rightly characterizes the first ten years of the Stoudite period as "the most productive and happiest years of his life."<sup>6</sup> Theodore's energy during this period was devoted to renovating the Stoudios monastery and creating an ideal monastic community on a larger basis than the family oriented Sakkoudion. At this time he even inveighed against those who build for themselves churches and monasteries (as his family did in Sakkoudion), bringing in for the purpose innumerable slaves and bond-maids (δούλους καὶ δούλας instead of ed. ὕλας), and administer the institutions as their own (col. 812B). Theodore compiled in Stoudios, among other things, collections of rules or admonitions (*Great and Little Katecheseis*) which regulated the administration, discipline and morals of the monks.<sup>7</sup> This harmonious existence did not last for long. The rest of his life was spent in fierce political conflict.

Two events determined Theodore's involvement in high politics: the divorce and second marriage of Constantine VI and the revival of Iconoclasm under Leo V. In 795, when Theodore was still in Sakkoudion, Constantine VI divorced his wife Maria of Amnia (a village in Paphlagonia) and married her lady-in-waiting Theodote.<sup>8</sup> The patriarch

<sup>5</sup> R. JANIN, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins*, Paris 1975, 177-181.

<sup>6</sup> FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 11\*.

<sup>7</sup> On these see BECK, *Kirche*, 492f; for a new translation see A. M. MOHR, *Théodore Stoudite, Petites catéchèses*, Paris 1993.

<sup>8</sup> On Constantine's divorce see P. SPECK, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer Fremden und der Versuch seiner eigenen Herrschaft. Quellenkritische Darstellung von 25 Jahren byzantinischer Geschichte nach dem ersten Iconoclasmus*, Munich 1978, and especially J. FUENTES ALONSO, *El divorcio del Constantino VI y la doctrina matrimonial di san Teodoro Estudita*, Pamplona 1984.

Tarasios, after some vacillation, gave in and allowed the *oikonomos* Joseph to celebrate the “lawless” union. Two factors aggravated Theodore’s attitude toward this crisis: firstly, Constantine, together with his mother Irene, was the glorious restorer of icon veneration; secondly, Theodote belonged to Theodore’s own lineage. Despite these political considerations and personal relations, both Platon and Theodore objected to the “adulterous marriage”, and Constantine took revenge on them by banishing both to Thessalonike. Their exile did not last long, since in 797 Irene managed to blind her son and became single ruler of the land. Theodore returned to Sakkoudion, and the *oikonomos* Joseph was deposed.<sup>9</sup>

The conflict, however, was not over. When Nikephoros I replaced Irene, and the patriarch Nikephoros was elected in place of the deceased Tarasios, the government raised the question of the “adulterous marriage”. The issue was not the marriage itself but the *oikonomia* (dispensation) to be granted to the deposed Joseph. With tremendous energy Theodore rejected the dispensation: not on purely legal grounds but primarily because he considered the move to be an intrusion of the emperor’s will into the ecclesiastical domain; the more so because he distrusted the patriarch Nikephoros, a layman suddenly promoted to the patriarchal throne. Theodore, Theodore’s brother Joseph (archbishop of Thessalonike) and Platon were exiled. Theodore stayed on the island of Chalke until the death of the emperor Nikephoros in 811. Thereafter the Stoudites were restored, but their triumph was of short duration: the usurper Leo V the Armenian (813-20) opened a new page in Iconoclastic propaganda. This time Theodore (his uncle died in 814) acted in accord with the patriarch Nikephoros (and with Theophanes the Confessor), resisting the “tyrant”. Enraged, Leo deposed Nikephoros and replaced him with an Iconoclast, Theodotos Melissenos Kassiteras. Theodore, Joseph of Thessalonike and their closest supporters went anew into exile and were imprisoned. The new emperor Michael II (820-29), who seized the throne after having murdered Leo V, was by no means an Iconophile, but he preferred a milder policy; thus in 821 Theodore and his partisans were released from confinement. For a while Theodore dwelt in Bithynia, but fled thence to Constantinople as the rebellious army of Thomas the Slav approached; despite Thomas’ pro-Iconodulic stand the Stoudite did not want to have dealings with the rebels. In his letters, Theodore called the mutiny a “civil war” (ep. 478.27, 512.7) and linked it with the raid of the Hagarenes (ep. 512.7).<sup>10</sup> In 826 Theodore died on the island of Prinkipo, as recorded in the speech on the

<sup>9</sup> See P. KARLIN HAYTER, A Byzantine Politician Monk, St. Theodore Studite, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 217-232; cf. A. KAZHDAN, Some Observations on the Byzantine Concept of Law, in A. E. LAIOU-D. SIMON (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, Washington 1994, 200-206; D. GEMMITI, *Teodoro Studita e la questione moicheiana*, Mariano (Napoli) 1993.

<sup>10</sup> The revolt of Thomas was in fact supported by the Arabs. On Theodore’s attitude toward Thomas see P. LEMERLE, Thomas le Slave, *TM* 1, 1965, repr. in ID., *Essais sur le monde byzantin*, London 1980, pt. III, 262f., and especially H. KÖPSTEIN, L’usurpateur Thomas et les Arabes, *Graeco-arabica* 4, 1991, 127-140.

*translatio* of his relics, whereas the *Vita* wrongly relates that he passed away in the monastery of St. Tryphon in Bithynia.

Born to a family of Constantinopolitan functionaries, connected with the court by numerous ties, Theodore communicated with a host of high-ranking dignitaries and their wives. This should cause no surprise. More unusual, however, are his connections with the representatives of the milieu of craftsmanship and trade. Theodore dispatches letters to an anonymous wax-merchant (κηροπράτης; ep. 93), to Leo, a dealer in spices (ἀρωματοπράτης; ep. 94), to George and Pardos, two linen-merchants (μυθανείς, ep. 260 and 261; all three terms are non-classical), and to a monk, Arkadios, who is forced to work as weaver (ἱστουγός) in an imperial workshop (ep. 390.20). A carpenter, Theophilos (ep. 165.17), was among Theodore’s confidants.<sup>11</sup> Even more revealing are Theodore’s *Katecheseis* which list dozens of artisanal professions associated with the Stoudios monastery.<sup>12</sup>

Probably around 801 Theodore addressed a letter to the empress Irene, actually a panegyric of the ruler. The monk eulogizes Irene for her reforms, the core of which was the release of the Constantinopolitan population from “unjust” taxes (ep. 7.32-34), the implementation of restrictions on *praktōres*, the tax collectors (l. 43-45), cancellation of a number of tolls on the land and the sea (l. 45-50), and conferring upon “mansions” certain privileges both in Constantinople and along the coast (l. 51-52).<sup>13</sup> This reform of taxation is described by Theophanes (p. 475.15-18) in less pompous and more technical wording: Irene “granted the citizens of Constantinople their urban taxes” (πολιτικοὶ φόροι) and decreased *kommerkia* collected at Abydos and Hieron.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that the laudation of Irene by Theodore was caused not only by the empress’ role in the restoration of the cult of icons, so dear to the saint’s heart, but also by her generosity to the merchants and craftsmen of the capital. And in the same vein, his attack on Nikephoros I and his court reflected not only Theodore’s attitude toward the case of the *oikonomos* Joseph, not only his desire to defend the church from the imperial “arbitrariness” or “totalitarianism”, but also his rejection of Nikephoros’ fiscal policy, so relentlessly criticized by Theophanes.

Although Theodore’s father (and, for a time, his beloved uncle Platon) served under the Iconoclastic emperor[s], Theodore’s own stand was distinctly Iconodulic. He wrote

<sup>11</sup> On the social composition of Theodore’s correspondents see I. ŠEVČENKO, Was there Totalitarianism in Byzantium?, in C. MANGO-G. DAGRON (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, Aldershot 1995 [Society for the Promotion of Greek Studies. Publications 3], 101f.

<sup>12</sup> DOBROKLONSKIJ, *Prep. Feodor* 1, 412f. established, primarily on the basis of the *Great Katechesis*, the list of crafts employed in Stoudios. Some monastic craftsmen are addressed in his epigrams (discussed below, p. 255).

<sup>13</sup> Theodore’s statement, “The mansions (οἶκοι) are not impoverished (ἀπορούμενοι) by the danger of these base exactions,” is not clear. What are these *oikoi*? What is the nature of these exactions? Our translations preserve the obscurity of the original. On Theodore’s characterization of Irene’s fiscal reforms, see J. B. BURY, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire*, London 1912, 3.

several treatises against the Iconoclasts (the so-called *Antirrhetikoi* as well as *Problemata* and *Kephalaia*) and expanded on this polemic in a number of his letters. He interpreted the Iconoclastic controversy as a continuation of Christological discussion; for him the denial of Christ's image was tantamount to denial of His human nature.<sup>14</sup>

Theodore's position *vis-à-vis* both Constantine VI's adulterous marriage and Michael II's Iconoclasm led to his confrontation with the imperial government; he was an outspoken proponent of the Church's independence from the emperor's will,<sup>15</sup> and saw in the strong monastic organization a powerful instrument in the fight for ecclesiastical non-conformity. In this fight Rome was Theodore's natural ally, and the Stoudite was willing to accept the idea of the primacy of St. Peter's throne.<sup>16</sup>

Much more complex and far less studied is Theodore's attitude toward the family. It seems that the Iconoclasts saw the family as the central social unit and tried to strengthen family links and to restrict freedom to divorce; it is perhaps possible to better understand their anti-monastic policy, accompanied by pageants of weddings of monks and nuns, in this light. Theodore's shift from the family monastery in Sakkoudion to the community (*koinobion*) of Stoudios is indicative of his predilection: the ideal way of life for him was that of a *koinobion*. Nevertheless Theodore was quick to appropriate the Iconoclastic manipulation of family values. He consistently emphasized the significance of family connections: he wrote to the *topoteretes* Niketas that a man's duty is to respect the *basileus* and his parents, to love his wife as himself, and to disdain fornication (ep. 468.18-20). "Let us love our wives as our own body," he says in a letter to the *xenodochos* Theodore (ep. 470.16-17), and even more graphically: "Since the monastic order never treats the monastery and its belongings as manure, how can a layman neglect his wife, children and so on?" (ep. 39.73-75). No other Byzantine epistolographer of the ninth or tenth centuries

<sup>14</sup> Much has been written on Theodore's philosophy of the icon, e.g. V. GRUMEL, L'iconologie de saint Théodore Studite, *EO* 20, 1921, 257-268; J. MEYENDORFF, L'image du Christ d'après Théodore Studite, *Synthronon*, Paris 1968, 115-117; Th. NIKOLAU, Die Ikonenideologie als Ausdruck einer konsequenten Christologie bei Theodoros Studites, *Orthodoxes Forum* 7, 1993, 23-53; G. TSIGARAS, Philosophisches Instrumentarium der Christologie von Theodoros Studites über die Darstellung des menschengewordenen Logos, *Annuaire hist. concil.* 20, 1988/9, 268-277; K. PARRY, Theodore Studites and the Patriarch Nikephoros on Image-Making as a Christian Imperative, *Byzantion* 59, 1989, 164-183; U. R. JECK, Prototyp-Ikone-Relation. Zur Bildertheorie des Theodoros Studites, *Zeitschrift für Ostkirchliche Kunst* 4, 1993, 206-214.

<sup>15</sup> A concise formulation of his views is given in the record of his speech on the Council of 815 (Leo Gram. 209.9-11): addressing the emperor Theodore allegedly said: "Your concern is the state of civil community and of the army; tackle these institutions but let the church be Orthodox."

<sup>16</sup> After the old article by J. RICHTER, Des heil. Theodor, Abtes von Studium, Lehre vom Primat des römischen Bischofs, *Katholik* 54, 1874, pt. 2, 385-414, see Ch. VAN DER VORST, Les relations de s. Théodore Studite avec Rome, *AB* 32, 1913, 432-447; S. SALAVILLE, La primauté de s. Pierre et du pape d'après s. Théodore Studite, *EO* 17, 1914, 23-42; M. MARKOVIĆ, Sv. Teodor Studit i njegove veze sa Rimom, *Teološki pogledi* 16, 1984, 111-120. The traditional view was questioned by J. GILL, St. Theodore the Studite against the Papacy, *ByzF* 1, 1966, 115-123.

corresponded so widely with women,<sup>17</sup> a fact which seems to indicate his respect for the other sex. Perhaps his stand during the Moechian crisis, his energetic castigation of the Orthodox emperor Constantine VI for the adulterous marriage with Theodote (who was, we should remember, Theodore's cousin), and his readiness to suffer exile for his radical stance were accounted for by his belief in the sacrosanctity of marriage.

### B. Laudations

Among his various writings, Theodore of Stoudios also worked in the established genre of homiletics, compiling sermons on various ecclesiastical festal days, such as Easter or the Dormition.<sup>18</sup> One of his panegyrics eulogizes the Egyptian hermit Arsenios<sup>19</sup> (d. 445) who was born in Rome to a noble family, received the very best education, was appointed by Theodosios I as preceptor of Arcadius and Honorius and served in the palace of Constantinople until he was forty years old. Then, he left everything behind and retreated to the desert. Theodore affirms that Arsenios' life had never before been described, that the saint has been mentioned only sporadically and that his own composition relied, in part, on oral tradition. He evidently depends on the tale (διήγημα) of the abbas Daniel (to which he refers) or other earlier hagiographers. More innovative was Theodore's funeral panegyric for his uncle Platon.<sup>20</sup>

There are some common features in the two hagiographic discourses, beginning with the noble origin of both protagonists, their wealth, their desire for *hesychia*, and their monastic serenity. More important is the political accent of both stories. For example, in the epilogue of the *Enkomion for Arsenios*, Theodore complains that the "Fiend" had entrapped some monks (who were not as resolute as Arsenios) and prays for peace in the church (p. 262.17-18 and 21-22). The theme of monks who betrayed the just cause fills the *Epitaph of Platon* (as well as Theodore's correspondence): Theodore laments the wrath of emperors and—a yet more regrettable phenomenon—the anger of those of "our" order (ὁμοταγῶν) (PG 99, 840B); laymen, he continues, were more forgiving than monks (col.

<sup>17</sup> A. KAZHDAN-A.-M. TALBOT, Women and Iconoclasm, *BZ* 84/85, 1991/2, 396-400, cf. K. NIKOLAOU, Γυναίκες επιστολογράφοι στη μέση βυζαντινή περίοδο (8ος-10ος αι.), *Ἡ Ἐπικοινωνία στὸ Βυζάντιο*, Athens 1993, 173-180.

<sup>18</sup> A brief survey in BECK, *Kirche*, 493f. and FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 25\*-29\*.

<sup>19</sup> BHG 169, ed. Th. NISSEN, Das Enkomion des Theodoros Studites auf den heiligen Arsenios, *BNJbb* 1, 1920, 241-262 = PG 99, 849-881.

<sup>20</sup> BHG 1553; ed. PG 99, 804-850. On Theodore's epitaphs of his mother and Platon see A. SIDERAS, *Die byzantinischen Grabreden*, Vienna 1994, 97-100.

840C). The two panegyrics differ, however, enormously both in their styles and the monastic ideal they praise. If the authorship had not been clearly stated in the lemmata, one would naturally question whether they were written by the same individual.

The *Enkomion for Arsenios* consists of separate units (novelettes) pasted together, like the episodes in the *Miracles of St. Artemios*, without any attention to their chronological sequence. The emperor functions as an eponym to define the time of the events, and appears only in the introductory section before the actual exploits take place. On the other hand, the strength of the *Epitaph of Platon* is in the logic of its composition. The plot develops chronologically: from the reign of Constantine V to that of Irene and Constantine VI, and finally to Nikephoros I and his defeat by the Bulgarians. The separate units of which it is composed are linked together by formulas of transition which show the author directing the flow of his narration. At least three of these formulas of transition are indicated by the verb *παραιρέχω* (to run past) marking digressions, from which the tale returns to the main thread (col. 820B, 825D, 840C). The episodes are chronologically consecutive and structured in such a way that the artistic suspense increases, reaching its dénouement at the very end of the panegyric. Theodore begins with Platon's quiet secular life, when, as the writer says, he became "the symbol of piety" (col. 809A), preparing the reader lexically for the next episode, Platon's admission to the monastery of *Symboloi*. In the monastery Platon was as loved for his modesty as he had been popular in his secular life among the eupatrids with unmarried daughters. This section ends with his election to the office of father superior (col. 816C). He grew famous, Theodore reports later, and everybody was fond of him (col. 824A). The author celebrates the restoration of icon worship by Irene which forms the happiest moment in Platon's biography. There then follows a change of direction: "I shall shift my discourse to something notorious" (col. 829A), meaning Constantine VI's adultery. This episode has been foreshadowed in the preceding unit by Theodore's mention of future "manifold ordeals" (col. 824A). But his first ordeal—as far as it receives treatment in the *Epitaph*—is short, and soon Platon is released from his exile and returns victorious (col. 833A). Again the formula of transition follows: "What comes next?" (col. 833D), followed later by "One must return to the plan that has been set forth (*προαίμενον*)" (col. 836C), and then again, "How is it possible to express in a few syllables so many circumstances?" (col. 840A). Theodore presents Platon's predicament with regard to the affair of the *oikonomos* Joseph: the hero's personal fate, arrest and illness (the illness is foreshadowed in the previous unit by the story of Platon's retirement from the hegoumenate [col. 828BC]) are interwoven with the general plight of the country, with the sufferings of the Orthodox everywhere, and it seems that the plot has reached its climax. Theodore, however, diffuses the tension, relating how Nikephoros I softened his cruel heart and brought the sick hero back to Constantinople. But Nikephoros, although ready for reconciliation, perished in the war against the Bulgarians.

And then the blow strikes. "What comes next?" Theodore again asks (col. 844C), reinforcing the transition by the exclamation: "How can I describe without tears the end

[of this man]?" (col. 845C). Platon is dead, he hands over his soul to the angels who will bring it to the sun of justice (col. 848B). As for Theodore, he is now an orphan.

Arsenios' virtues are demonstrated by a series of scenes and conversations found in old tales about desert fathers; Platon's virtues, on the other hand, are pointed out rather than pictured. Theodore says that his uncle was sweet in his speech and even sweeter in his deportment; he was ascetic by appearance and well educated, chaste with respect to family life, supportive of "virgins" (nuns?), courageous (lit. stimulating) in his relations with authority, a doctor of the feeble of the soul, and so on and so forth (col. 820C-821A). A comparison can show the difference in approach between the two texts. Platon's diet is described as the standard ascetic one: he ate bread, pulses, vegetables and *akrodrya* (possibly hard-shelled fruits such as nuts), except on festive days when he joined the community (col. 817BC). About Arsenios we have no such general statement. But we are told how abbas John Kolobos threw him a piece of dried bread (*παξιμάς*, a vernacular word), and the saint, on all fours, ate it up like a dog (p. 248.11-14). The scene depicts Arsenios' extreme humility and is reminiscent of the behavior of a holy fool. The closest episode to such "vivid" scenery in the *Epitaph of Platon* is the story about two *strategoï* sent by Constantine VI to the "unarmed monk of Christ" (col. 829C), but even this lacks detailed description and concentrates on the punishment and exile of the brethren; in the same vein, the scene of Nikephoros I summoning the monks of Stoudios in order to persuade them to end resistance (col. 840CD) provides no details except for the observation that they were gathered in a bath-house.

The language of the *Enkomion for Arsenios* is plain, lacking any rhetoric, save for the epilogue (p. 260-262) devoted to the direct praise of the saint, who is addressed as φωστήρ τῶν ὑπ' οὐρανοῦ φανότατε, ἀσκήρ ἡσυχαστῶν αὐγοειδέστατε (p. 262.8-9) and so on—a unit in which periods are constructed as near isokola and strengthened by assonance. The *Epitaph of Platon* begins with a criticism of rhetoricians and sophists who are not interested in truth but seek to adorn their speech in order to titillate the audience (col. 804A); and yet the text itself is consistently rhetorical. Theodore uses contrasts, polyptota, anaphoras and other figures of speech, piles up epithets, and employs archaic grammatical forms (such as the pluperfect) and numerous composita, sometimes unknown from other authors, such as μυριοίκις πόλις or χεῖρ ὠραιωγραφοῦσα (col. 805CD).

The portrait of Platon is obviously traditional and rhetorical. One characterization of him begins: "He was sweet (*ἡδύς*) in eloquence, sweeter (*ἡδύτερος*) in manners, ascetic in appearance (*εἶδος*) and—here occurs an intricate word-play— manifold (*πολυεδής*) in learning" (col. 820C); the sound "id" is repeated in all four epithets. But though rhetorical and one-dimensional, the image is powerful: Theodore admires his uncle's ferocity and steadfastness, his refusal to be placated. Brought up in wealth and comfort, he was modest and obedient (unless his beliefs were challenged); old and sick he defied and defeated the emperor. Platon fights for the true faith, but his heroism is earthly—he does not perform miracles.

In the patristic period few eulogies were written devoted to the laudation of the author's relatives. One such eulogy was Gregory of Nyssa's *epistole* praising his older sister Makrina; and Gregory of Nazianzus extolled a brother, a sister and their father in funeral speeches. No such familial *enkomia* survived from the Dark Century. Theodore not only created (or recreated) this genre, but did it in a personal style: his own presence in the panegyric is ubiquitous. Early in the story he stresses that Platon had a companion and assistant, none other than the narrator of the story (col. 825C). Several times he mentions "our" persecutions and banishments, he grieves over his orphanage, not knowing upon whom he can rely now that his soul is shattered (col. 848C). Especially striking is the passage praising Platon who was not ashamed to address Theodore as "father" (Theodore being by this time his father superior), whereas he, Theodore, was not even worthy to be called his son (col. 836B).

The *Epitaph of Platon* is not the only work of the familial genre in Theodore's *œuvre*. He devoted another panegyric to his mother Theoktiste.<sup>21</sup>

In about 798 Theodore received from his mother a letter informing him that she had a fatal illness. He responded immediately (ep. 6: Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 21-23), weeping bitterly; "if it were possible to send tears in letters I would have filled this letter [with them]." In his imagination it was as if he had already learned of her death, he eulogized her in tears, he created an elegy for her grave. Despite the tears however, his work came first: he had recently been elected *hegoumenos* (of Sakkoudion), and was now busy with the duties of his office, fettered by iron chains to his post; so he was unable to pay a visit to his mother on her deathbed, and sent in his stead a priest. He was, however, sure that his mother, who chose "the narrow and rough path" to God (cf. *Matth.* 7.14; a formula commonly used by the Church Fathers and hagiography), would not die (spiritually?), because she had by her own will mortified herself during her life, had already shaken off earthly concerns in order to inherit the heavenly.

Thus he did not see Theoktiste before her departure to God, but he did write more than an elegy for her grave—he wrote a funeral sermon (*κατήχησις ἐπιτάφιος*), as the work is defined in the lemma. Theodore delivered this sermon himself, most probably in the monastery of Sakkoudion, addressing "children and brothers" (PG 99, col. 884A); he announced the death of "the sister of our common father" (Platon) to those who knew her personally and enjoyed her succor (col. 896BC). The date of the homily can be determined with considerable precision: Theodore refers to the end of the exile and dispersion of his monks (col. 897A), implying the persecutions by Constantine VI in 797.

As if justifying his reserved letter, Theodore begins the sermon with a statement that his mother's demise filled him not with irrational grief (rhetorically he plays with words *λύπην καταλιποῦσα*), but with joy, because she had been transferred to the supernatural realm by the will of God. Unlike the *Epitaph of Platon*, the funeral sermon is not

"historical," not eventful. "In the beginning," says Theodore as if eliminating the movement of time, "we see the end" (col. 884BC), and he describes not his mother's actions but her good qualities (*προτερήματα*) (col. 888C), from her household virtues (such as her compassion for slaves) to her broader concerns—for neighbors, the indigent, orphans, widows, lepers and so on. These virtues, concludes Theodore, are sufficient for a person living in a family (lit. "in marriage", i.e. not in a monastery) (col. 889B), but Theoktiste took a further step—she followed her brother and became a nun.

Here Theodore stops and concludes: "Such were the distinguishing marks of the life of our mother in the world." He outlined her image, he continues, so that not only his audience (the monks of his monastery), but also people in the outside world, having listened to this narrative (the writer speaks of "most exemplary stories", *κάλιστα διηγήματα*, col. 892A), would praise God. Theodore now reaches the climax, the only event that occurs in the speech, Theoktiste's tonsure. From this moment on he promises to turn toward the major and specific goal of his discourse (col. 892AB), namely her stay in the nunnery. But suddenly he changes his plan and paints a very human scene of her farewell banquet: Theoktiste invited her entire family, including Theodore and Platon. "We were celebrating and we were weeping," he says employing a paradox, for they welcomed Theoktiste's tonsure, but were sorry to be separated from her. Theodore was in anxiety and pain, but Theoktiste remained steadfast, overcoming the "tyranny" of maternal sentiments (col. 892C). Then the tension grows, as Theoktiste sees her children and relatives persecuted (by Constantine VI) and nevertheless behaves courageously, admonishing them to suffer rather than yield to the "adulterer" (col. 893BC). Theodore was banished during a fierce winter; separated from his closest partisans he experienced fear, but his mother did not tremble and called on him to resist. Theoktiste also suffered during this period of persecutions. The description of her sufferings, however, is abstract: threats, tears, sympathy for the children and the whole flock, sadness because of the "fallen" (traitors); in biblical terms Theodore says that she ate of the bread of pain and drank of the cup of affliction (col. 897A).

The epilogue to the sermon is consistently personal, devoted to the relationship of the mother and son: Theoktiste who taught, supported and guarded Theodore, was at the same time obedient to him, so that he characterizes her with a word of his own invention, *μητρό-τεκνος* (col. 901A), lit. "the mother child", while he does not fail to add that she had divided her modest possessions between him and his brother.

The image painted by Theodore is that of a strong, energetic, devoted woman. As her first virtue he names piety—not only worship, but the love of God (col. 884C). She was temperate, never swore or lied, abstained from meat and theatrical games, and knew a single man only (col. 885C); we remember that she abandoned sexual life in the last years, before taking the habit. She was charitable and did not shun manual work. These virtues are standard qualities of saintly women, but Theodore supplements the more or less conventional picture with some specific traits. Unlike ordinary women who would use

<sup>21</sup> BHG 2422; ed. PG 99, 883-902.



amulets and charms and put magic necklaces on their children, she protected "us" solely with the sign of the life-giving cross (col. 884C-885A); never did she adorn her little daughter with hair-clasps, bracelets or purple bordered garments (col. 888AB). Theodore is not ashamed to mention that she could be overbearing to people under her charge, and even nudged those who fell asleep during services and slapped the disobedient (col. 900A). In a sense, she was a self-made person, illiterate because of her orphaned childhood, and only with age did she come to understand letters and learn the Psalter by heart. A precious detail illustrates the tension between Theodore's parents: Theoktiste did not study during day-time lest she irritate her husband, but only before sleep and soon after she had awakened, by the light of candles, and even while reading she did not neglect her chores (col. 885B).

What is remarkable in this sermon, written only a decade after the restoration of icon worship, is the lack of any mention of icons. On the other hand, the theme of icons occupies a key place in the *Epitaph for Platon*: in that text Constantine V offended the icon of Christ calling it an idol, Irene restored the veneration of holy icons. Nothing of this kind is stated in the sermon on his mother; Theodore informs the reader only that Theoktiste protected her children with the sign of the cross, but he makes no mention of the cult of icons. Was *eikonodoulia* not among the virtues of the spouse of a financial officer who served under Constantine V? Could such a passionate defender of icons as Theodore of Stoudios forget even for a short while divine images? There is no way to solve the riddle, and a riddle it is.

Another text, known from the Georgian translation only, is even more enigmatic. It is attributed to Theodore of Stoudios, but a cloud of doubt shrouds the attribution. The text is devoted to barbarian attacks on Constantinople and the supernatural help of the Theotokos who successfully defended her city each time. M. Van Esbroeck published the part which deals with the reigns of Maurice and Herakleios, along with a short note on the siege of 678. Later he supplemented this publication with the story of the Arab defeat under Leo III and a panegyric on the Virgin.<sup>22</sup> This "chronicle" has a parallel in the tale of the siege of Constantinople attributed (erroneously?) to the patriarch Germanos (see above, p. 58) as well as a short Greek narration about the sieges (PG 92, 1353-1372). One of the Georgian manuscripts containing this discourse is dated to 1042, implying that the Greek original must be earlier. According to Van Esbroeck, it dates to before 860, since it is silent about the attack of the Rus'. Van Esbroeck refers to a passage in a *Vita of Theodore of Stoudios* which relates that the saint wrote panegyrics on the Lord, on the Mother of God, and on the Prodromos. But in the surviving Greek corpus of Theodore we have no historical excursus that corresponds to the Georgian work. Moreover, it would be quite out of place for Theodore to warmly praise a victory by the founder of the Iconoclastic heresy.

<sup>22</sup> M. VAN ESBRÖECK, Une chronique de Maurice à Héraclius dans un récit des sièges de Constantinople, *Bedi Kartlisa* 34, 1976, 74-96; ID., Un panégyrique de Théodore Studite pour la fête liturgique des sièges de Constantinople, *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of R. Taft*, Rome 1993, 525-536.

However, these last two considerations may not necessarily be sufficient to rule out the attribution to him of the original of the Georgian manuscripts.

### C. Fervent correspondence

*Theodori Studitae epistulae*, ed. G. FATOUROS, 2 vols., Berlin, New York 1992

Theodore's letters<sup>23</sup> are probably the most remarkable monument he left behind. We possess numerous collections of letters of the fourth through early seventh centuries (Theophylaktos Simokatta being the last in this series), but no collection survived from the Dark Century. It does not mean, of course, that people stopped sending written messages, and in fact some epistles of the patriarch Germanos were read during the sessions of the Council of Nicaea in 787 and are preserved in its minutes.<sup>24</sup> To what extent these letters, devoted primarily to the theological aspects of the cult of icons, can be treated as literary discourses is another issue. Were the letters of the late seventh and eighth centuries lost due to ill fortune or was the frequency of correspondence lower in this period? A letter by Theodore to his disciple Athanasios written in 818 (ep. 383) allows us to surmise that the early ninth century witnessed a revival of the epistolographical genre. The advantage (ἄγαθόν) of these days of persecution, contemplates Theodore in the letter to Athanasios, is that we hear more frequently (συχνότερον) from each other, communicating by letters and unfolding the disposition of our hearts; letters arrive daily, despite the prohibition against sending them from confinement. If we take Theodore's words at face value, it was during the persecutions of Leo V that correspondence between monks became frequent. Michael, Theodore's biographer, knew a collection of the Stoudite's letters in five books,<sup>25</sup> probably gathered by his devoted disciples. The letters were more than a means of communication: a missive from a saintly person became itself a relic capable of working miracles. According to a *Vita of Theodore* (PG 99, 312AC), a woman who lived in the region of Rhabdos, in Constantinople, kept an ἐπιστολίδιον from Theodore; when her house was on fire she successfully used the letter, as if a relic, to extinguish the flame.

Although Theodore emerges as an epistolographer after a long period of relative inactivity in the genre, his letters show rhetorical sophistication, a mastery of figures of speech, and skill in presenting his case graphically and persuasively. Did he acquire this

<sup>23</sup> On the identification of some correspondents of Theodore see S. EFTHYMIADIS, Notes on the Correspondence of Theodore the Studite, *REB* 53, 1995, 143-163.

<sup>24</sup> Bibliographical data in BECK, *Kirche*, 475.

<sup>25</sup> PG 99, 264D; see B. MELIORANSKIJ, *Perečen' vizantijskikh gramot i pisem*, St. Petersburg 1899, 3.

skill in school or was he self-taught? We have no way of finding out. Unquestionably, he learned much from late Roman epistolographers, especially Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great. G. Fatouros points out that Theodore's *mimesis* of Basil was not reader oriented, since it seems likely that few of his addressees would have been able to identify the numerous quotations from the famous church father; rather, they served an esoteric goal of the author, his self-identification with his great paragon.<sup>26</sup>

In a letter addressed to a certain John, his spiritual "child" (ep. 219), Theodore described the virtues of the letter form as he saw them. I enjoy your letters, he explains to John, because they are marked by inner sequence (*καθ' εἰρμὸν ἔρχονται*) and avoid the unpleasantness of loquacity; the virtue of the letter, he continues, is to get to the subject immediately, to tell only what is necessary and not to wander in circles (l. 2-6). Indeed, Theodore's letters are short and get right to the subject; but they are more than that: they are human and give us the portrait of an extraordinary personality.

The voluminous correspondence (564 letters in Fatouros' edition, but several contain no more than the name of the addressee) is concentrated around two major topics, both political. The first was the case of the *oikonomos* Joseph, who had conducted the "adulterous marriage" ceremony of Constantine VI and eventually was given a dispensation and reestablished as a priest by the patriarch Nikephoros in 806. Theodore (together with his uncle Platon) refused to accept this dispensation (*oikonomia*), broke off communication with the patriarch, rejected the decision of the church council of 809, and was exiled to the island of Chalke. The second topic is the resistance to the Iconoclasm of the emperor Leo V in 815-20; again Theodore was arrested and banished, driven from one fortress to another, separated from his monks and deprived of books.

Written mostly in exile, usually smuggled out by visitors (the prisoners were not allowed to communicate with their supporters), these letters have a surprisingly optimistic tone. In the winter of 815/6 Theodore wrote to his favorite disciple Naukratios<sup>27</sup> (Fatouros' edition contains 54 letters to Naukratios) that he had just learned about the exile of his brother Joseph, metropolitan of Thessalonike, and some other monks. For many modern readers, perhaps, his reaction is somewhat surprising: "I feel kingly, masterly, I rejoice and dance; I envisage earthly plights as if luxuries" (ep. 115.25-27). This motif of the joy of martyrdom is repeatedly expressed in his letters: "What is better, what is more blissful than to suffer in the name of Christ," he exclaims in a letter to his disciple Gregory (ep. 122.4-5). The delight of suffering acquires cosmic dimensions: "The East is joyous, the West jubilant, each church in all four quarters is rapturous with delight—and not only the earthly world: heaven itself is full of delectation" (ep. 301.7-10). Theodore is certain that victory will come. He reminds the Orthodox monks that the Christians were persecuted for more than 200 years, from the *kerygma* of the Apostles to Constantine, "the first Christian

<sup>26</sup> G. FATOUROS, Die Abhängigkeit des Theodoros Studites als Epistolographen von den Briefen Basileios' des Grossen, *JÖB* 41, 1991, 61-72.

<sup>27</sup> On Naukratios see E. LIPŠIC, Navkratij i nikejskie mozaiki, *ZRVI* 8/2, 1964, 241-246.

emperor" (ep. 381.85-88), and thus, in turn, the Iconoclastic assaults will come to an end. In a letter to the *patrikios* and *sakellarios* Leo, composed probably in 818/9 (ep. 400), Theodore states that he understands the anxiety and sadness of his correspondent, but the predicament of their time is a part of the general plan of salvation: "We have to endure the retribution for our sins perpetrated in public and in private, and thereafter God will cleanse us."

Theodore suffered jail, hardship, flogging, and freezing winters, but he did not yield. Like his mother he was not born to give in. He defied patriarchs and emperors. He deplored the betrayal committed by some of his "children" and shuddered on observing how princes of the Constantinopolitan Church, bishops and *hegoumenoi*, joined the Iconoclast camp. He bore his burden courageously and encouraged his supporters to flee from the Iconoclasts or, even better, to undergo the ordeal and to die for Christ if necessary. But even a mighty heart has its limits: the letter to Athanasios [of Paulopetron] written in 818 is a rare text in which we see not a superman ready to die for his ideas but an old tired wrestler in despair. Theodore starts by explaining the reasons for his dilatoriness in replying: the conditions in his prison had become more severe, Naukratios was arrested, and there was other ill-fortune of which it was hard to write. They should bewail what was happening: the people had become corrupt and worthless, the churches dumb and defiled, every company entertained blasphemy and Christ was sleeping (l. 9-12). "Christ sleeps," repeats Theodore in a letter to his beloved brother Joseph (ep. 333.22). Only Christ knows when the day of healing will come (ep. 321.15-16) —we are on the threshold of the coming of the Antichrist (ep. 362.8). "Why did I say this?" he asks rhetorically in a letter to the *hegoumenos* Makarios, and supplies his own answer: "In order to get some relief by giving vent to the sorrows of my humble soul" (ep. 362.18-19).

Thus the letter acquires a new function: it is not merely a means of communication (this function could often be fulfilled to better effect by a letter-bearer), it is also a means to express the anxiety of the soul.<sup>28</sup> At the end of a letter to Theophylaktos of Nikomedeia (as also in the letter to Makarios) Theodore explains that he painted this gloomy picture not to inform his correspondent, who was aware of all these troubles, but in order to alleviate the suffering of his heart, to assuage his deep pain (ep. 314.27-31). And, in more general terms, this "realistic" idea of writing as self-expression is formulated in a letter to the *hegoumenos* Symeon: Your holy fathership engraved (*ἐχάραξεν*) for our sake a letter worthy of your saintly and God-bearing soul; your letter is for us truly the embodiment (lit. animation or stimulation? *ἐμψύχωμα*, the word is Theodore's, cf. ep. 497.31) of your bravery and the entrenchment (*χαράκωμα*) of your strength (ep. 26.2-3, 9-10). It is clear that Theodore is playing with the verb *χαράσσω* and its derivatives in two senses: the

<sup>28</sup> On the ancient concept of the letter as an "icon of the soul" see K. THRAEDE, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik*, Munich 1970, 157-161; cf. A. R. LITTLEWOOD, An 'Icon of the Soul': the Byzantine Letter, *Visible Language* 10, 1976, 197-226.

technique of writing, and the military term, which is fitting for the theological and political context of the letter.

Besides these two major political themes Theodore's correspondence deals with other subjects, both "scientific" and moral. His letters of instruction may be defined as scientific.<sup>29</sup> A letter to Naukratios (ep. 384) may serve as an example of this sub-genre. Following a preamble and a note on the fall (treason) of a certain Anatolios, there follows the third part (the numbering is Theodore's) "on the questions (or points) which you put before me"; it comprises six item-answers, beginning with "if" or "if someone".

In the group of letters dealing with "private", individual morale belong, first of all, sundry letters of consolation:<sup>30</sup> λόγος παραμυθητικός, as the type is defined in a letter to the *patrikios* Basil (ep. 398.17) who had just lost his son John. Theodore portrays the spiritual and bodily image of the young man, "clean in body, candid in soul," who is characterized by abstract epithets similar to hagiographical practice, but differing from it on account of the letter's "secular tone". John was well brought up so far as his behavior and eloquence were concerned; he had a harmonious character and manner of speaking, and his appearance made those who saw him fond of him; he possessed richness of the soul and body. Theodore understands that no discourse—whether by man or angel—can give relief to a parent who has buried his child; only God can do this (ep. 18.19-22). Yet he offers "the remedy of consolation" (ep. 498.11) to a mother whose son fell in war. Moreover, in a letter to the sisters of the deceased Moschos he boldly compares himself to Christ comforting the sisters of Lazarus (ep. 211.3-5).

Another type encountered in his correspondence consists of travel letters. Theodore did not always travel of his own free will, but was sent several times into exile, and he described his impressions of the places he saw and people he met. In a letter dated 797 to his uncle Platon (ep. 3),<sup>31</sup> he narrates how the apprehended monks made their journey (ὁδοιπορία) mounted on a few animals (probably mules). They went through villages, in which people of all walks of life gathered to see them as if viewing a spectacle and whose noisy shrieks sounded in the ears of prisoners. Theodore lists the sites they passed: Kathara, Libiana, Leukai, Phyraion. In the latter township occurs something "worth relating" (ἱστορίας ἄξιον): nine "prominent brothers" met them like stranded sheep, and they tore apart their hearts; alas, the guards did not permit them to communicate. Theodore continues enumerating places and persons until the narrative reaches Parion; he does not mention, however, that they changed their means of transportation, from animals to boats. Later he indicates that in Lampsakos they spent three days waiting for good weather; here the verb "sail" makes its first appearance. In Eleountes the monks lingered a whole week until favorable winds started blowing. From Lemnos they sailed twelve hours and covered a

<sup>29</sup> "Didaktische Briefe", according to HUNGER's (*Lit.* I, 204) categorization.

<sup>30</sup> On the ancient letters of consolation see S. K. STOWERS, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Philadelphia 1986, 142-151.

<sup>31</sup> On this letter (publication and commentary), see J.-C. CHEYNET-B. FLUSIN, *Du monastère Ta Kathara à Thessalonique: Théodore Stoudite sur la route de l'exil*, *REB* 48, 1990, 193-211.

hundred and fifty miles, full of fear of a tribe that dwelt near the shore. They moored in the area of Thessalonike, and changed again to animals. The prisoners entered Thessalonike through the Eastern gate, where they were met by a unit of soldiers who locked the gate after them and led them across the market place, past those curious to see them, to the *archon*, who received them kindly and allowed them to see the archbishop and to attend the service in Hagia Sophia.

A letter to Naukratios (ep. 146) describing Theodore's transfer from Metopa to Bonita is of a similar nature. The place is a hundred miles from the Lycian coast; his journey took fifteen days and passed without serious hardship, for the road was not muddy and his guardians showed sympathy and respect for him. A certain *patrikia*, the wife of Tourkos, and neighboring *archons* were kind as well. Theodore noticed that the water in an adjacent lake was salty and lacking in fish, which led him to formulate an optimistic metaphor: Christ will transform the brine into fresh water and make the fishless basin full of fish (l. 10-11). He could expect an improvement in his situation.

The epistle to the empress Irene (ep. 7) is a political panegyric, and many political letters eulogize the protagonists of the anti-Iconoclastic movement. Bordering on eulogy are paraenetic letters offering advice and exhortation. One of the finest letters of this sub-genre is the missive addressed to the *protospatharea* Albeneka, a relative of the empress Theodosia, sent sometime between 815 and 819 (ep. 395). Theodore responds to a letter of Albeneka he had just received and read twice. Albeneka expressed in her letter a desire to put on the monastic habit, and Theodore advises her to be careful: she has been given to her husband and cannot be easily separated from him. Quoting St. Basil he advises her to start by discussing the matter with her spouse, making clear to him how ephemeral the world is, how everything is destined to perish "like the flowers of the field" (*Ps.* 102.15). If she persuades the man to allow her to withdraw from the world, there will be no problems. If he disagrees and love of God still urges her, Albeneka can go ahead against her husband's will. Having said this, however, Theodore immediately retreats: all this is difficult, he surmises, in these days of persecution, particularly since you are not an ordinary woman, but a relative of the empress (l. 31-33). One needs to read between the lines in this letter: certainly, Theodore cannot be seen to dissuade the woman from entering a nunnery, but he cannot really encourage her either; he had enough troubles as it was with the administration of Leo V without now getting himself accused of enticing a kinswoman of the empress into monastic life. As a monastic leader he is eager to acquire an influential nun, as a shrewd politician he perceives the dangers of such a move. It is not easy to give advice. Theodore struggles to perform a balancing act.

Friendship was a recurrent theme of ancient epistolography,<sup>32</sup> and Theodore frequently speaks of φιλία (friendship) and addresses his correspondents as φίλοι, friends.

<sup>32</sup> H. KOSKENNIEMI, *Studien zur Ideologie und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis auf 400 n. Chr.*, Helsinki 1956, 115-124; G. KARLSSON, *Idéologie et cérémonial dans l'épistolographie byzantine*, Uppsala 1959, 57-78.

"I write this because of friendship," he says to Peter of Nicaea, "not because of need" (ep. 313.3). "In times of tribulation," states the Stoudite, "one recognizes true friends, as just those who, beset by the storm, take shelter in a safe haven" (ep. 330.2-3). Again he quotes Basil the Great saying that one has to give one's life for one's friend regardless of whether this friend is sinful or righteous (ep. 383.26-28) —the quotation, however, is not precise since Basil recommended that one should love not only friends but also enemies (*Regulae Morales* 176: PG 31, 1200B). In a letter to the *xenodochos* Abraamios, Theodore spells out three foundations on which their friendship is based: the first is political, Abraamios acting as a mediator between Theodore and the *basileis*; the second is purely personal, Abraamios having communicated with him during his banishment to Anatolikon; the third is religious, with Abraamios belonging to the Orthodox movement (ep. 440.5-10).

Political and religious friendship can become stereotyped in their portrayal, but the relationship of which Theodore writes to his "child" Gregory is thoroughly individual, personal, human. "Please recollect," he writes, "the days long past when kings and hierarchs were unable to drive a wedge between us, remember the chain of love (ἀγάπη) that was unbreakable" (ep. 269.10-14). "We were inseparable and we were invincible," continues Theodore, and then asks: "What happened?... What severed you, my heart, from me?" (l. 19-20); "If I did something wrong, forgive me" (l. 21-22). The letter is the cry of a man anxious to preserve the old, albeit damaged, friendship, and its author is "another" Theodore, no longer the steadfast fighter capable of facing any foe, including the emperor himself.

The kind of letter we might least expect from Theodore is the erotic letter, and yet there is one missive that belongs to this category, although its eroticism is that of Christian love. This is the letter addressed to an aristocratic lady, the *patrikia* Irene (ep. 55). Theodore begins it with a rare word *φιλτροποιός*, "preparing love-charms", which is used in the fictitious erotic letters by Aristaenetos (ed. O. Mazal, Leipzig 1971, vol. 2, 18.33). "A written address," states Theodore, "is a love-charm creating a bond between the souls of lovers"; and he continues: "Communication (or "intercourse", *ὁμιλία*: see Aristaen. 1, 1.43) rekindles (ἀνασκαλεύουσα, no such meaning in Liddell-Scott) the dormant erotic sparks." He speaks of the feeling of love (ἀγαπητικὴ διάθεσις), of the love remedy (ἀγαπητικὸν φάρμακον) and, more modestly, of spiritual friendship.

We may be certain that the relations between Theodore and Irene, whom he respected greatly and even called his spiritual mother (ep. 87.4), were not erotic. Letter 55 is only a "game", but it is important that Theodore liked to play with such erotic terminology in the context of Christian love. On the other hand, he was ready to emphasize the difference between superficial friendship of the flesh which would perish in difficult circumstances and the true *agape* unrestricted by space and unyielding under all tribulations (ep. 170.2-5). And when Theodore returns to the theme of love in another letter to the *patrikia* Irene, he means there the zest, the passion and *eros* which are directed at God (ep. 372.7).

Replete with sincere feeling, Theodore's letters are nonetheless rhetorical in form. By using the term "rhetorical" we are really indicating two things: first, an abstract, "deconcretized" imagery, lacking precise details, and, second, an abundance of literary figures, the tendency to raise wording above the level of ordinary speech. Probably in 815-18, Theodore sent a letter to the same *patrikia* Irene (ep. 156) in which he ranked her among the confessors of Christ: Irene is persecuted, has no house, no town, she is surrounded by enemies, constantly facing dangers. "Who does not know," he says combining a rhetorical question with a paronomasia, "that you are a co-confessor (συνωμολόγησας) among confessors?" (l. 9-10). He calls her the martyr of Christ, the neomartyr bearing Christ's stigmata, and stresses that Irene is a martyr from among the ranks of senators, and that monks and laymen alike praise her. Under his pen Irene becomes a supernatural being: she has left the earthly dignity for the heavenly dignity (a polyptoton) and she enters into battle with the Devil himself. The Devil, who is wounded by her, hates her: he prods into hostility her husband, her child, her whole kin, the members of the senatorial order (ὁμοσύγκλητοι, a neologism?), her female acquaintances, slaves and maids.

This is Theodore's way of structuring images: few concrete details and numerous figures of speech. But earlier, when examining Theodore's so-called travel letters, we saw his interest in details, even in specific numbers (days, hours, etc.), and in fact we found, although infrequently, some descriptions of his surroundings. He tells Naukratios (ep. 376) that he and his companion Nicholas were locked in an *ἀνώγειον* (the first meaning of the word is "upper floor" but the *Souda* explains it as "prison"), and that the door was barred and the ladder removed; the guards were positioned around so that nobody could reach Theodore's chamber. Each person entering the *kastron* was immediately directed to his own house. As for the condition of the prisoners, they were given only water and wood [for the hearth] (l. 21-27). We are in a grave, continues Theodore, but God takes care of us. And the man who climbs the ladder to bring them only the things which are ordered, in fact provides them with additional food.

The ordeal of the *hegoumenos* Euthymios also acquires some concrete features. If we accept Theodore's account, the martyr received twice 166 and again twice 200 blows of the whip (ep. 51.15-22). The victim lay in the church of the Archangel (in Thessalonike), his blood covering the floor, until a merciful person carried him away and cured his wounds. Styles are mixed in this description: the picture is evidently hagiographical, the archbishop of Thessalonike is called "tyrant", and Theodore concludes the episode with the statement that Euthymios was miraculously (lit. paradoxically) lifted to the pillar of Orthodoxy and triumphed over those of ill repute (*κακοδόξων* as contrasted with "Orthodoxy"; another conventional pun is the play on Euthymios' name and the word for "cheerfulness", *εὐθυμία*). The location is precisely defined, the exact number of blows indicated, and the blood of the victim is "naturalistically" said to stain the feet of people entering the church. The pitiful picture is framed by rhetorical figures: puns accumulate (for instance l. 24-25: the man was beaten [*τυπτόμενος*] for his veneration of Christ's likeness [*τύπος*]),

alliteration is used to stress the immense volume of the blood spilled (l. 31-33: five words beginning with π!).

A letter to Naukratios (ep. 49) demonstrates that Theodore understood well that form of expression is a key element in argumentation: he praises the strength (εὐτονον) of Naukratios' missive and accepts the idea of his discourse (διάλεξις), but Naukratios had to adorn it with "the means of grammar" (γραμματικῆς σχόλια); it is necessary to possess power and experience of expression (in other words, rhetorical skill) in order to defend Orthodoxy (l. 4-8).

#### D. Epigrams

Ed. Theodoros Studites, *Jamben auf verschiedene Gegenstände*, ed. P. SPECK, Berlin 1968; previous edition A. GARZYA, *Theodori Studitae epigrammata*, *EEBS* 28, 1958, 11-64

In a letter addressed to Naukratios, Theodore mentions his desire to write iambics against the Iconoclasts (ep. 108.8). This he in fact did. Litoios, another disciple of Theodore, asked his master about his anti-Iconoclastic iambics, and Theodore relates to him that the verses contain an acrostic. He goes on to explain to Litoios the technique for reading the acrostic (ep. 356.4-7). He sends Litoios his text to read and copy, but Litoios, he warns, must take care to hide the copy from the impious, since this literary exercise could be punished with death (l. 8-10). These poems were lost: writing to his brother Joseph, Theodore laments the loss of the iambics he composed against the Iconoclasts; Joseph should not have sent them without keeping a copy (ep. 333.6-9).

The *Vitae* of Theodore list several of his verse works.<sup>33</sup> Many epigrams of Theodore have survived. Some of these epigrams are devoted to icons of Christ and of the Theotokos. Many praise prophets, apostles and saints, mostly of the fourth and fifth centuries; among them is Arsenios (no. 82) whom Theodore eulogized in a panegyric. Chronologically, the latest of the saints lauded by the Stoudite is the seventh-century Theodore of Sykeon (no. 75). Certainly, devotion to icons (and to some extent the eulogy of saints) contradicted the policy of Leo V, but it is difficult to imagine that reading this kind of poetry could have risked incurring the death penalty. In his letters to Joseph and Litoios, Theodore may have been referring to something different, something politically more dangerous, for instance the poetic refutation of the [Iconoclastic?] heresy, mentioned in his *Vitae*.

As in the case of the letters, Theodore, if not an inventor of a new genre (epigrams circulated until the beginning of the seventh century when George of Pisidia introduced

<sup>33</sup> See P. SPECK, *Parerga zu den Epigrammen des Theodoros Studites*, *Hellenika* 18, 1964, 30-35.

Christian themes into the genre of the epigram),<sup>34</sup> was at any rate its restorer.<sup>35</sup> Certainly, we know the names of several Iconoclastic writers of iambics although the date of their life is under discussion. Theodore knew them and produced a treatise rejecting their ideas.<sup>36</sup> But it is under his name that the first collection of Byzantine verses is preserved.

Some of Theodore's epigrams deal, like those of George of Pisidia, with churches and monasteries and their parts, with ecclesiastical furniture and textiles, icons, crosses, relics, and even prisons. There is, however, no library among Theodore's objects of praise, whereas George devoted an epigram to the library of the patriarch Sergios (Sternbach, no. 46). Another group of epigrams by the Stoudite describes various persons, both living and dead. This type of epigram is not characteristic of George who addressed only one distich to a member of the clergy (Sternbach, no. 108). On the other hand, in Theodore's poetic *œuvre*, as N. Radošević-Maksimović emphasizes, the majority of original verses are those dealing with persons. Only a few of these persons have parallels in his letters, for instance his sister (no. 105f.). We must, however, be cautious with identifications, and similarity of names can prove deceptive: the acrostic to no. 117 "On a deceased person" includes the name of the *patrikia* Irene, but this woman of Armenian descent who had lost a young husband, a valiant and famous hero, is obviously not the *patrikia* Irene, a saintly victim of the Iconoclastic persecutions.<sup>37</sup>

A set of epigrams handles the members of the monastic community. Theodore indicates only their functions, not their specific offices. Some of these functions are low, such as cobblers (no. 19) or tailors (no. 15), a *kellarites* (no. 12) or cooks (nos. 13-14). Again, the author of these epigrams is an "unusual" Theodore, not the resolute warrior of Christ but the man of a warm heart, showing sympathy for the simple human being. The tone is not elevated as it is in his letters, and a monk, for example, can be likened to a wise merchant (no. 3.8). The crown is bestowed here not upon a fearless fighter for the right faith but a humble hero of the kitchen (no. 14.1): "Who will not crown you, my child, the cook, performing your chores days on end? Your work is that of a slave, but your reward is great; your service is dirty, but it cleans vices; the fire scorches you now and then, but not in the future..." To this group of epigrams can be added Theodore's *Kanon on the death of a monk* (if the lemma "of the Stoudite" is sufficient to attribute authorship to him).<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> L. STERNBACH, *Georgii Pisidae carmina inedita*, *Wiener Studien* 13, 1891, 16-18, and *ibid.*, 14, 1892, 51-68.

<sup>35</sup> On Theodore's place in the history of the Byzantine epigram see F. DÖLGER, *Die byzantinische Dichtung in der Reinsprache*, Berlin 1948, 25; HUNGER, *Lit.* 2, 167f. An attempt at assessing the literary significance of the epigrams is made by N. RADOŠEVIĆ MAKSIMOVIĆ, *Književna vrednost epigrama Teodora Studita*, *ZRVI* 14-15, 1973, 197-245.

<sup>36</sup> PG 99, 435-478; see P. SPECK, *Die ikonoklastischen Jamben an der Chalke*, *Hellenika* 27, 1974, 376-380. Cf. also ID., *Tà τῆς βατταγίσματος πλάνα*: Überlegungen zur Aussendekoration der Chalke im achten Jahrhundert, *Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte*, Amsterdam 1995, 211-220.

<sup>37</sup> On Irene cf. SPECK, *Jamben*, 299.

<sup>38</sup> Published by M. ARCO MAGRÌ, *Il canone in requiem monachi di Teodoro Studita*, *Helikon* 18-19, 1978/9, 276-292; cf. EAD., *Un canone inedito di Teodoro Studita nel cod. Messanensis gr. 153*,

Theodore's conceptual world is traditional. He addresses a grave with a stereotyped, pre-Christian statement: death is insatiable, it engulfs equally all walks of life —the small and the great, the fortunate and the homeless, the wise and the uninitiated, the sour-looking and the well adapted (no. 110.2-5). In the second part of this epigram the dead appear before the divine tribunal and present their actions, both good and evil. Traditional is the figure of modesty developed in the epigram on the monastic cell (no. 2), in which Theodore laments how he is a lazy laborer and the worst of the inhabitants of this cell; he is unable to adorn it with the brilliance of his prayers or enrich it with the stream of his tears or purify it with the chastity of his conduct; he entreats God to wake him up, to sever him from passions and to lead him to salvation.

No less traditional is his epigram *On himself* (no. 97) addressed to his "humble soul": time is rushing by like a fast runner (are the words ὄξυς and δρομεύς perhaps alluding to the ὄξυς δρόμος, the rapid post service?), the end is nigh and nobody can escape it. We should not entertain futile concerns, trying to fill up a broken jar or throwing wool onto the flames. Let us search with love for things divine, things which bring salvation, so that we may come courageously before the Lord and Judge, and escape the flames of Hell.

There is nothing of "himself" in the epigram *On himself*, only stock phrases about death and salvation. The epigram *On himself* by George of Pisidia (no. 107) is more personal: it not only includes the author's name in the text, but the poet proudly affirms that his poem resembles the beauty of the garden of Eden. Theodore, like his friend Theophanes the Confessor in the preface to his historical work, tended to replace the late antique self-esteem by the notion of submission, divine fear and divine love. Accordingly the poet is ready to embrace the "other" as himself: Theodore's verses about unimportant men in the monastic community are written with love, piety and sympathy. His goal is the salvation of Christian society no less than his own individual salvation.

If one were to choose a phrase that characterizes Theodore's literary production, "breadth of interest" would probably be the most apt. He worked in various genres, and was responsible for renewing or restoring some of them after a long silence. Letter, epigram and familial panegyric are the most marked examples. The sub-genre of the family panegyric was continued: to this kind of hagiographical discourse belong the contemporary *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful* (see below, p.281-291), as well as the *Vita of David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos* produced within two generations of Theodore (see above, p. 200-202); later, there followed the *Vita of Theodora of Thessalonike*. Innovative though he was, the Stoudite did not completely do away with traditional genres, such as festal sermons or kanons. The people he wrote about were both members of the Byzantine élite and simple individuals, craftsmen and monks; his heroes were "confessors," unyielding victims of state persecution, and the humble laborers of manual chores; he was not sexually biased and

*Miscellanea in onore di A. Attisani* 2, Messina 1971, 84-101. On other hymns attributed to Theodore see SZÖVÉRFY, *Hymnography* 2, 31-33.

praised men and women alike. He was a paragon of modesty, but for the sake of the true faith he defied the imperial authority and was ready to embrace the death of the martyr.

Theodore's language is diverse. He can be rhetorical, even in his private letters, while on the other hand he is bold enough to disregard established grammatical rules and produces numerous neologisms.<sup>39</sup> The vocabulary of his epigrams is simpler than that of his correspondence or of his speeches on Platon and Theoktiste, and rhetorical figures are less frequent, being limited usually to a play on the name. The *Enkomion for Arsenios* seems to have been written in a style differing from that of his familial *enkomia*. Theodore of Stoudios was not a uniform *literatus*.

### E. Another homilist: Michael Synkellos

Michael Synkellos was a saint, and his *Vita* was produced by an anonymous hagiographer.<sup>40</sup> The writer of the *Vita* is usually thought to have been a younger contemporary of the saint, although this claim is difficult to substantiate. I. Ševčenko advanced two arguments in support of the early origin of the *Vita*: the hagiographer praises Michael III (p. 116.17) and deliberately omits the name of "a certain learned man" (p. 68.22-23) whom Ševčenko identifies as the Iconoclastic patriarch John the Grammarian. Ševčenko concludes that the *Vita* must have been produced before the death of Michael III and John.<sup>41</sup> However, is this conclusion beyond doubt? While the official chronography of the tenth century was indeed anti-Michael, some tenth-century texts, by contrast, accuse Basil the Macedonian of murdering his predecessor; thus the pro-Michael position of Michael Synkellos' hagiographer is not unique and is at best a questionable chronological indicator. Who the "learned man" may be we do not know. Even if he is John the Grammarian, we have no way of knowing why his name is omitted in this episode —John is explicitly named in another passage (p. 102.8) and characterized negatively. On the other hand, the hagiographer does not claim personal knowledge of the saint and while he refers to his informants (p. 128.10-13) he fails to provide us with their names. His information is limited: he acknowledges the lack of data about Michael's parents (p. 44.15), and he tells us more about the brothers Graptoi, Theodore and Theophanes, and about the history of the Chora

<sup>39</sup> G. FATOUROS, Zur Sprache des Theodoros Studites, in W. HÖRANDNER-E. TRAPP (eds.), *Lexicographica byzantina. Beiträge zum Symposium zur byzantinischen Lexikographie* (Wien 1.-4.3. 1989), Vienna 1991 [Byzantina Vindobonensia 20], 126-128.

<sup>40</sup> BHG 1296; ed. M. B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, Belfast 1990 [Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 1].

<sup>41</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 30f. n. 19.



monastery than of Michael's deeds. He relates that the Synkellos shortly before his death admonished the monks of the Chora monastery to bear with fortitude the approaching ordeals and to remain obedient to their *hegoumenoi* (p. 126.20-23). If we interpret this sentence as a reflection of the hagiographer's life experience and not a literary topos, it presupposes some distance in time between the hero's death and the creation of the *Vita*. The hagiographer quotes letters and speeches and gives many precise dates which in some cases can be shown to be incorrect. Such a way of writing is probably more typical of a scholarly work than contemporary reminiscences. The *Vita* cannot be later than the tenth century, however, since the earliest manuscript (Genoa, Congregazione della missione urbana 33) was copied in the eleventh century.

According to the *Vita*, Michael (ca. 761-845/6) was born in Palestine, probably to an Arab family; he entered the monastery of St. Sabas and ca. 811 was appointed *synkellos* to the patriarch of Jerusalem. The patriarch Thomas (807-21) sent him with an embassy to Rome, but Michael did not go farther than Constantinople where the embassy lingered for unknown reasons. After 815, Michael and his companions, including Theodore and Theophanes Graptoi, became victims of the Second Iconoclasm. Theodore of Stoudios wrote him a letter, addressed to "Michael Synkellos Hagiopolites", i.e. of Jerusalem (ep. 547). According to this letter, Michael was heading "to a different place" but fell in the hands of "the rulers of these places". Theodore exhorts him to remain faithful to the veneration of icons. The anonymous biographer relates that Michael, upon the triumph of Orthodoxy, was offered the throne of Constantinopolitan patriarch, but turned the offer down, and, subsequently, the new patriarch, Methodios, appointed him *synkellos* and *hegoumenos* of the Chora monastery (p. 104.30-31).

Michael was a learned man and a professional grammarian. In ca. 811-13 he wrote a treatise on syntax based on classical authorities.<sup>42</sup> And he was acquainted enough with ancient poetry to eventually produce an anacreontic on the restoration of images<sup>43</sup>. Various works attributed to Michael Synkellos are known, but confusion is caused by the fact that there was another *synkellos* Michael alive at the end of the century who wrote the eulogy for the patriarch Ignatios that was read at the Council of Constantinople of 879-80. A fragment of this work has survived. Since Ignatios died in 877, this Michael—dubbed monk, priest and *synkellos*—cannot be the same figure as Michael the Hagiopolites who

<sup>42</sup> D. DONNET, *Le Traité de la construction de la phrase de Michel le Syncelle de Jérusalem*, Brussels, Rome 1982; cf. ID., *Michel le Syncelle. Traité de la construction de la phrase: les manuscrits de l'Athos, Byzantion* 57, 1987, 174-180. See also R. H. ROBBINS, *The Byzantine Grammarians: Their Place in History*, Berlin 1993 [Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 70], 149-162.

<sup>43</sup> *Die byzantinischen Anakreonten*, ed. Th. NISSEN, Munich 1940, 48-52; see C. CRIMI, *Sull testo dell'anacreontea di Michele Sincello di Gerusalemme, Orpheus* 7, 1986, 152-163 and ID., *Aspetti dell'imitatio nell'anacreontea di Michele Sincello di Gerusalemme, Metodologia della ricerca sulla tarda antichità*, Naples 1989, 317-327.

had passed away in 845/6. Thus there is a problem in determining which of these two Michaels was the author of homilies bearing this name. R. J. Loenertz suggested that the Hagiopolites wrote the panegyric for Dionysios Areopagite but ascribed other sermons (on Zacharias, the father of Prodomos, and some saints) to his namesake of the second half of the century.<sup>44</sup> It is noteworthy that the anonymous hagiographer does not mention Michael's literary activity.

Joseph of Thessalonike, Theodore of Stoudios's brother, is known first and foremost as a hymnographer (see below, p. 270), but several sermons and panegyrics in prose are also ascribed to him. Their attribution, however, is questionable and accordingly the date of their composition in many cases remains unclear.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> R. J. LOENERTZ, *Le panégyrique de s. Denys l'Aréopagite par s. Michel le Syncelle, AB* 68, 1950, 94-107, repr. in ID., *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca*, Rome 1970, 149-162. BECK, *Kirche*, 504, even admits the possibility of the existence of a third Michael the Synkellos.

<sup>45</sup> BECK, *Kirche*, 505.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE NEW HYMNOGRAPHY: CLEMENT AND HIS SUCCESSORS

#### *A. Clement*

Clement was popular with neither the Byzantines nor historians of hymnography.<sup>1</sup> Even though he was a saint of the Byzantine church, no Vita of Clement is extant. A short entry in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 713.3-5) celebrates his memory, but informs us only that Clement was a confessor and wrote kanons. The anonymous *Kanon on Clement* tells us more:<sup>2</sup> the saint is said to have dwelt “on the holy Mountain”, which designated, most probably, the Bithynian Olympos; he lived as a confessor, defending the veneration of the icon of Christ, was exiled (by the Iconoclasts), and was granted a blessed death. Attempts to identify him with other Clements (especially with one mentioned in the correspondence of Theodore of Stoudios: Clement, a Stoudite monk whose Iconodulic position was not always consistent<sup>3</sup>) fail to convince, since they are based only on the identity of names; nor is there any reason to hypothesize the existence of two hymnographers of this name.<sup>4</sup>

Clement’s surviving *corpus* is not large; it includes less than thirty kanons, most of which are genuine, while the authorship of a number of others is possible. The majority of the kanons are festal hymns praising the Mother of God, the Taxiarchs (literally “generals”, here meaning archangels), personages of the Old Testament and Christian

<sup>1</sup> On him see M. ARCO MAGRÌ, *Clemente innografo e gli inediti canoni cerimoniali*, Rome 1979; A. KAZHDAN, An Oxymoron: Individual Features of a Byzantine Hymnographer, *RSBN* 29, 1992/3, 19-58.

<sup>2</sup> Published by S. PÉTRIDÈS, Office inédit de saint Clément, *BZ* 12, 1903, 575-581.

<sup>3</sup> On him see FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 407\* n. 799.

<sup>4</sup> BECK, *Kirche*, 518. The theory of the existence of two Clements was rejected by PÉTRIDÈS, *op. cit.*

saints. Another group is composed of the so-called ceremonial kanons (on the death of a *hegoumenos*, of monks and of a nun, on the funeral of a priest, on the monastic habit). The so-called *Hortatory Kanon* (which we shall discuss later in detail) holds a special place. Since Clement devoted a kanon to *St. Niketas of Medikion* (ed. C. Nikas, AHG 8, 74-86), Theodore of Stoudios's friend, who defected from the Iconodulic cause under pressure from Leo V's government, but eventually repented and perished in 824, a victim of the Iconoclastic persecutions, Clement must have died after 824. The beginning of his career, however, is less easy to determine.

Clement's kanon *On the Taxiarchs* (*Menaion*, Nov. 8) not only contains copious references to the worship of icons, but is permeated also with the idea of ecclesiastical peace and unity: Gabriel, says the poet, now announces, on the feast day of the Taxiarchs, the unity of Churches and the end of the inimical heresy; we are granted peace, and all the riots, heresies and scandals have been eradicated. It is reasonable to assume that the heresy meant here is Iconoclasm. In this case the passage may apply to two possible occasions: the ecclesiastical peace established by the Council of Nicaea II, whose closing session took place on October 23, 787, or the restoration of the cult of icons at the local council of Constantinople in March of 843.

The theme of peace occupies a substantial place in a kanon *On the restoration of icon worship* in 843, attributed in the manuscripts to Theodore of Stoudios.<sup>5</sup> The attribution is evidently wrong, since Theodore died almost two decades before the event. It is usually assumed that the author of the hymn was the patriarch Methodios (on him, see below, p. 369-379). The author, whoever he was, reveals more than Clement in his kanon *On the Taxiarchs*: he exclaims that God extinguished "the furnace of heresy" and gave relief to the servants of the Trinity after "four weeks of years", in other words after 28 years; he counts these years from "the council of impious priests", i.e. that of 815; he evokes by name several leaders of Iconoclasm, dwelling particularly on the patriarch John "the Christomachos", that is John the Grammarian. The idea of peace, εἰρήνη, is common to both kanons.

To which of the two Iconodule victories does the kanon *On the Taxiarchs* refer? Considering the fact that the feast of the Taxiarchs was celebrated on 8 November, it is possible to assume that the hymn was written immediately after the closure of the Council of Nicaea on 23 October 787. If this hypothesis is correct, Clement must have been born, most probably, before 765. In this case he would have been more than sixty in 824. It is therefore likely that he died shortly after this date.

Two circumstantial details seem to support this hypothesis. Firstly, almost all the kanons by Clement are more or less concerned with the defense of icons. Setting aside some ceremonial kanons and the unusual *Hortatory Kanon*, it is only in a single genuine kanon, *On Akindynos and Companions* (AASS Nov. I, 510-521), that this subject is

<sup>5</sup> PG 99, 1767-1780. See J. GOUILLARD, Deux figures mal connues du second iconoclasme, *Byzantion* 31, 1961, repr. in ID, *La vie religieuse*, pt. VI, 380.

completely ignored. There is, however, another kanon, *On the Patriarchs* (*Menaion*, Dec. 18), that has lexical affinities with the *Kanon on the Taxiarchs*, but the attitude toward icons expressed here is completely different. Clement uses the term "icon" not in an Iconodulic sense, but in the meaning of "idol", in a context connected with the Three young Hebrews who destroyed and melted the "golden icon", and despised the glory granted to it "according to the likeness (κατ' εἰκόνα)". It looks therefore as if the kanon *On the Patriarchs* was produced before the Council of Nicaea, when the veneration of icons had not yet been officially restored.

On the other hand, the kanon *On Niketas of Medikion* is the only poem by Clement in which the theme of inimical assault is touched upon. Whereas other hymnographers, beginning with the author of the *Akathistos Hymn* (see above, p. 70-73), and particularly writers of the ninth century, praised victory over the barbarians or entreated saints to destroy their armies, Clement remained indifferent to this theme. Even in the kanon *On Niketas* he was not seeking the defeat of the barbarians; rather, he expected their conversion and pacification. Clement asks the saint to intervene and appease the "tribes", to make them reject their habits, to bend their obstinate necks and to fall to the floor; "may you satiate," he says to the saint, "the [spiritually?] hungry tribes."

If, as we suggest, Clement was active under Irene and Nikephoros I, he eyewitnessed a relatively quiet period of Byzantine warfare; the danger became real after Nikephoros' defeat in 811. But soon after 811 the new wave of Iconoclasm struck, and it was not a good time for ecclesiastical poetry. In his defiance of the government of Leo V, Clement had to share the fate of many outstanding Iconodules: he was arrested and exiled. When he was released following Leo V's murder, the country faced the menace of the "tribes" (the Arabs and Bulgarians), and around that time, after 824, he wrote the *Kanon on Niketas*, possibly one of his last extant poems.

Certainly, Clement's biography as established here is largely conjectural. What is not conjectural, however, is the attribution of kanons to Clement. Unlike his predecessors, the great hymnographers of the Dark Century, Clement systematically "signed" his hymns by including his name in the acrostics. He used the "double" acrostic in which the first letters of the stanzas refer to the content of the poem, while the acrostic of the *theotokia* reveals his name.<sup>6</sup> If our chronology of Clement's life is correct, he must be the first poet to employ the double acrostic; further, he is probably the first poet who consistently "signed" his works and who consistently inserted *theotokia* as the last troparia of each ode (to replace the ninth ode devoted to the Theotokos in earlier kanons). Unfortunately, the time of the invention of *theotokia* is difficult to establish, since the chronology of kanons and kanon-writers is far from clear; the so-called *theotokia* preserved in a Latin manuscript of the late ninth century (Paris, Bibl. nat. Lat. 10307)<sup>7</sup> are not in fact proper *theotokia*, but nine odes.

<sup>6</sup> W. WEYH, Die Akrostichis in der byzantinischen Kanonesdichtung, *BZ* 17, 1908, 51-53.

<sup>7</sup> E. JEAUNEAU, Θεοτοκία grecs conservés en version latine, *Philohistôr. Miscellanea in honorem C. Laga*, Leuven 1994, 399-421.

Moreover, Clement is the first (and only) Byzantine hymnographer to mark his kanons by a particular desinent line (with slight variations); the key word in Clement's terminal line was the verb *πληρῶν* (or a derivative with various prefixes, or occasionally its synonyms) usually linked with the noun *φῶς*. Thus the kanons of Clement have distinctive formal marks. They have more substantial, although less immediately discernible, individual marks of content as well.

As already mentioned, no Byzantine poet was as consistent as Clement in the worship of icons. He extols the icon in almost every hymn, and he employs a diverse vocabulary for the icon that includes not only such words as *εἰκών* and *μορφή*, which are common in hymns of other ninth-century poets (Clement does not use another typical term *χαράκτις*), but also more sophisticated (and individual?) designations such as *εἶδος*, *τύπος*, *ἐμφάνεια*, *θέα*.

Clement is more or less indifferent to the theme of commemoration (*μνήμη*) which was a very important liturgical concept frequently used in hymnic texts to describe the celebration of a saint and he almost completely avoids mentioning relics and the tomb of the saint. The only hymn in which we find an extended treatment of the theme of celebration is the canon *On the Taxiarchs* which, as suggested earlier, was probably written to celebrate the victory over the Iconoclasts, and this occasion justifies its exceptional, "festive" character, so distinct from other Clementine kanons in which the author is reluctant to emphasize the material aspect of celebration. In the canon *On the Taxiarchs*, Clement repeats the word *μνήμη* four times, speaks twice about "festivity" and announces the "auspicious day".

Clement is also indifferent to the theme of light so typical of most hymnographers. In the *Kanon on Niketas of Medikion* and in several other poems he uses some words related to the theme —the "sun", "star" or "shining"— but he omits to use directly the word *φῶς*, "light". And if he introduces "light" it is usually in a figurative sense. For example, in the canon *On Eustathios of Kios* (AHG 7, 311-319), Clement speaks of the saint's rising to the "light," but the word is used in a metaphorical sense referring to truth and does not characterize the brilliant appearance of the hero, even though in the *heirmos* of ode 1 Clement defines him as "brilliant shepherd". In the canon *On the Seven Sleepers* (*Menaion*, Aug. 7), light again assumes metaphorical, not corporeal existence: Clement puts "light" and resurrection of life together; he calls the heroes "immovable stars" with the emphasis on their stability, not radiance; and he introduces the image of the sevenfold lamp with an allusion to the number of heroes. Probably, the most traditional treatment of the theme of light is in the *Kanon on John Klimax* (*Menaion*, March 30). Having said in ode 3 that the saint radiated the rays of brotherly love, Clement, from ode 5 on, fully develops the theme. The light is divine: Christ is life and *φῶς*; John escapes the madness of darkness with the assistance of light, and he fills everyone with the divine *φωτισμός*, that is baptism. He himself becomes "the luminary of teachers" whereas the Mother of God is "the light-bearing lamp of grace".

Generally, light is not a dominant theme in Clement's hymns. His vocabulary of light, often non-traditional, is not greatly developed, and is rarely introduced in the first ode. More importantly, light in Clement's hymns is the property of God rather than of the saint; it characterizes Paradise rather than the struggle of the faithful against idolatry and heresy.

Historicity would seem to be an inappropriate term to use in the context of hymnographical texts. One does not ordinarily expect from hymns any factual information on historical events. We shall use the term merely to clarify the difference between two approaches in praising saints: the eulogy can be "rhetorically abstract", "deconcretized", piling up impersonal stereotypes, or it can include certain factual elements that may be called "historical." The "historical" element encompasses geographical coordinates, prosopography (beyond the names of heroes/heroines), hints of the saint's activity (factual or legendary), details of martyrdom and miracles. The trend toward "historicity" (or the lack of it) depended partly on the information available to the hymnographer, since the lives of some saints were better documented than others, but it could be an expression of the author's choice. In some cases historicity might denote a certain influence of the hagiography over hymnography. One and the same poet might appear more or less "historical" in different parts of his *œuvre*.

Clement's emphasis on "historicity" is consistent. With the exception of ceremonial hymns and the *Hortatory Kanon*, which by their nature leave no room for historical contemplation, almost all his kanons exhibit a "historical" approach, some to a very substantial degree. In the canon *On Moses* (*Menaion*, Sept. 4), Clement regularly indicates geographical locations: Egypt and [Egyptian] Thebes, the Red Sea, Moab, Thabor and Sinai, Chanaanians. He lists several biblical personages: Aaron, [Elias] Thesbites, the architect Bezelel. He recalls many facts of Moses' biography: birth, upbringing by the queen, the burning bush, legislation, manna, wars and the tabernacle. The *Kanon on Aberkios* (ed. J. B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra* 2, 1884, 180-185) is full of data: the hero was a disciple of Peter and Paul, cured women of blindness, released the queen from a vexing demon, ordered the Devil to carry an altar from Rome, repelled the damaging doctrine of Marcion, withered the insolent (*τολμηφόρος*, a hapax?) hand. In the *Kanon on Eupraxia* (AHG 11, 452-469), Clement names her parents and relates that she rejected wealth and noble status. He dwells in detail on Eupraxia's clumsiness: she fell [into a pit] but was not hurt, for neither precipice nor ax harmed her. It is not in general statements that he eulogizes her ability to work miracles, but in a specific scene —the moving of heavy stones.

The canon *On Longinus* (AHG 2, 178-188)<sup>8</sup> abounds in "historical" details. The poet recalls Pilate and Stephen the First Martyr, he conveys that Longinus was a former centurion originating from Cappadocia, and tells by way of digression the legend of the head of Longinus which was thrown into the dung heap and found by a blind woman, a poor spinner, who then regained her sight. The poet concludes the legend with a rhetorical contrast: "Grant to us, the blind, to behold the divine and spiritual light" (p. 186.143-145).

<sup>8</sup> On its attribution to Clement see KAZHDAN, *An Oxymoron*, 24.

One might well assume that Clement based this hymn (as well as some others) on a developed literary tradition which he dutifully followed. By good chance, however, we have for comparison another kanon *On Longinus*, authored by George (AHG 2, 189-192). The theme is treated there in a completely different manner: George's Longinus acts not in a concrete setting but in an abstract space as a proponent of light (the theme of φῶς pervades ode 1 and recurs later on); Clement sets Longinus in opposition to the Jews and Pilate, whereas George speaks in an abstract manner of the "enemy" or "adversaries", and heaps up pompous epithets such as "unshakeable rock" or "perfect burnt-offering". In George, however, there is no miracle with the severed head.

The kanon *On Nicholas of Myra* (AHG 4, 96-115), which we attribute to Clement by its desinent line, is markedly "historical". Not only are Myra and the region of Phrygia mentioned, but the poet is aware of the name of the saint's mother, Nonna, and relates that within two hours of his birth Nicholas was able to stand on his feet, that he restricted his feeding from his mother's breast, and that he learned the Holy Scripture. Nicholas is said to have built the church of Sion, and especially detailed here is the story about the liberation of three generals (he uses the technical terms in describing their titles, *stratelatai* or *stratopedarchai*); even the name and title of the eparch Ablabios are given. Conversely, two other kanons on Nicholas, "signed" in acrostics by Joseph (AHG 4, 76-84 and 196-207), are quite removed from "historicity". Joseph mentions that Nicholas was bishop of Myra, that he demolished the shrine of Artemis, and in a vague way relates that the saint liberated three "young men" (or "innocent men"). Joseph prefers generalized epithets, such as "divine legislator" or "the source of healing", and he praises Nicholas in an abstract manner for performing miracles throughout the whole *oikoumene* and saving those who were in chains, in serious predicament, in danger and in trouble.

In some Clementine hymns, "historicity" is less apparent. In the kanon *On Quadratus* (AHG 7, 137-149) traditional stereotypes prevail: tyrants, ordeal, healings, victory. In the kanon *On John Klimax* even Sinai (at the foot of which John spent most of his life) is omitted. However, here Clement develops the motif of teaching and writing, and calls John the "unerring [spiritual] guide (ὁδηγός)". Although *Hodegos* was the title of a major work by another Sinaites, Anastasios, the appellative "guide" befits the image of the author of the Ladder. Clement's interest in "historical" details corresponds to his neglect of stereotypes, such as the theme of light. Certainly, neither the former nor the latter feature is absolute; here and there standard formulas emerge in his poetry, and several of his hymns contain only a minimum of "historical" episodes. But Clement, more so than other Byzantine hymnographers, was keen on collecting "historical" elements and, conversely, less interested in adhering to traditional "deconcretized" imagery.

Some of the kanons by Clement show elaborate composition. The unity of the kanon *On the funeral of the priest*<sup>9</sup> is achieved through the use of pivotal words which emphasize two major ideas: our servitude and divine mercy (the use of key words, of course, is not

<sup>9</sup> J. GOAR, *Euchologion*, 2nd ed., Venice 1730, 455-460; cf. S. ZERBOS, *Euchologion mega*, 5th ed., Venice 1885, 451-460.

limited to medieval literature —thus in the modern novel "Do with me what you will" by J. C. Oates the word "nervous" and its synonyms appear on almost every other page, signifying the predominant sentiment of the narrative). At the same time the kanon is full of "movement", since Clement consistently develops this theme. In ode 1, he introduces the "cynic" concept of life's ephemerality: "The glory of life is like grass —it blooms (the meaning of the verb ἐξηγήθησθαι is both "it bloomed" and "it faded") and immediately dries out. Where in the grave is there a place for dignity, where a place for shape or beauty?" The cynic connotation is mitigated in ode 3, which deals with the idea of sin. Then in ode 4 Clement introduces the motif of judgment which continues in ode 5, where Gehenna and fearful punishment are depicted. Although these frightening images continue until the end, from ode 5 on the idea of salvation prevails, and is linked with the theme of repentance: Clement frequently uses such concepts as delight and paradise, and verbs of salvation, ἡσθῆναι, λυτρωσάμενος, σώζει.

Differently structured is the kanon *On the Theotokos*.<sup>10</sup> Clement begins with a "definition" of Mary as the unblemished bride and queen. Ode 1 concludes with the motif of glory and veneration. Mary's characterization is continued in ode 3 with the stress on the mystery of her virginity. Then follow odes 4 and 5 devoted to the glorification — mankind eulogizes the Virgin. In ode 6, Clement takes the next step by reversing the image: the Mother of God, a passive object of eulogy in two previous odes, becomes active: she gives life to mankind. Odes 4, 5 and 6 are contrasted and bound together at the same time, and their thematic substance is supported by their lexical nexus: "stained lips" in ode 5 are paralleled by "dirty lips" in ode 6. And thereafter, as one of the human mass, Clement professes his personal veneration of the Virgin in ode 7. Here, as in the *Kanon on the funeral of a priest*, the poet leads the listener toward the idea of salvation: the idea dominates odes 8 and 9, merging with the theme of glory touched upon at the beginning of the kanon.

The *Kanon on Eupraxia* has a distinct composition. Its unity is achieved by a "framework", a link between the beginning and end: Clement calls his heroine "the divine ornament" and "the standard of perfection for monks" in both ode 1 and ode 9. Its artistic contrast or tension consists in the juxtaposition of Eupraxia's physical deeds and their metaphysical essence. Clement praises the saint who dishonored the fleshless [evil spirits] with her feminine flesh, and depicts her postures, such as standing with hands lifted upward, and material objects (water, a precipice, an ax) used by demons as weapons against her. Her material hands are paralleled by "the right hand of Christ" that protected Eupraxia, and she is proclaimed ethereal and as overcoming "the bounds of nature" (the latter quality is usually applied to the Mother of God). The peak of this contrast/merging of the physical and metaphysical is reached in a materialized metaphor: Eupraxia trampled the boisterous and gluttonous serpent with the feet of temperance. Ode 7 is the triumph of

<sup>10</sup> S. EUSTRATIADÈS, *Theotokarion* 1, Chennevières-sur-Marne 1931, kanon 7, 26-29.

the saint, and it is no accident that Clement grants her as a "reward" a place among the throng of incorporeal beings —by this ascent her achievement of overcoming flesh is consummated. The poet summarizes his tale in odes 8 and 9, recapitulating the central ethical points: virginity and humility, twice repeating the word βίος, with its double sense of "life" and "story of a life", life or *vita*: Eupraxia attains "the blessed life" and "her life was marvellous".

In structuring his kanons Clement usually confronts the problem of unity and contrast: unity is achieved not only by prologue and epilogue, by a "framework" encasing the events, but by the conscious repetition of key words that bind together separate parts of the narrative. The contrast is multifarious: the material and incorporeal, death and eternal life, ordeal and victory —but the axis of this contrast is the ascent from the mundane and earthly lowliness to the heavenly spheres, in other words, salvation.

The formula of personal appeal to the saint or through the saint to the heavenly powers is common in hymnography. It has two aspects: the first —probably dominant—is "metaphysical", aiming at salvation, at spiritual liberation from the power of the Devil, at release from the state of sin; the other aspect, less frequent and vaguely expressed, deals with the real world of social and political threats. The formula "Save us from visible and invisible foes" is common in Byzantine poetry and prose alike.

The theme of personal appeal is weakly expressed in Clement's poetry. He either omits it completely or addresses his protectors not as an individual but as one of the flock, or he limits himself to a simple solicitation "Save me!" In the *Kanon on Nicholas of Myra* (in which the "Save-me" formula is present), Clement often speaks in the first person (for instance "I am praising Nicholas and the Virgin"), but while actually addressing the saint or the Mother of God he stands up as the speaker of the community: "Now, Nicholas, protect the emperor and grant peace to the world" or "Virgin, give the emperor victories over the enemies and pacify the church." Only in the *Kanon on the Virgin* does the theme of personal appeal find a traditional (?), developed expression. "Assist me," Clement entreats, "accept my request." He repeats his favorite "Save-me" formula, since he knows that the Theotokos granted salvation to sinners and to the humble. But even in these verses, Clement does not dwell in detail on his own sinfulness, asserting only that he is "stained with carnal passions".

Clement was less inclined to public atonement than other leading hymnographers writing after the *Megas Kanon* of Andrew of Crete. He was a man who did not parade his sins or bewail publicly his sufferings. Yet nevertheless it was he who wrote one of the most personal poems produced in his time, the *Hortatory Kanon*.<sup>11</sup> The poet (unless he is a "literary hero" speaking with the actorial voice) uses the first person: he is old, and his soul, oppressed by old age, is approaching the realm of Hades; he is afraid of death, he trembles; and he is a sinner, first among sinners, suffering from the ailment of sin. The poet compares

<sup>11</sup> ARCO MAGRÌ published it among the so-called ceremonial kanons under the Latin title "Pro infirmis morti proximi". The original title is Παράκλητικός Κανών (Hortatory Kanon).

himself to a whore bringing an alabaster vase as a present, and beseeches Christ to release him from the debt. Like the *Megas Kanon* the *Hortatory Kanon* is a cry for forgiveness, for salvation—but what a proud cry! The thematic moral of the *Megas Kanon* is salvation via atonement: Andrew brings to God the tears of his eyes and his deep sighs, his words functioning "as tears". Andrew touches the hem of Christ's garment, expecting heavenly amnesty. The traditional perception is that man can entertain hope because he is God's creature shaped in the likeness of God. Clement's position is different: his principal gift to the Lord is not tears of humbleness but poetry, and he hopes that his hymn will overshadow his sins. "Accept the hymn of my lips," he begs the merciful Lord, "and permit me to enter Thy Kingdom." "While wailing, o Lord," affirms the poet, "I praise Thee in sounds of a song." For a moment he recalls the posture of repentance and exclaims, "I am washing Thy holy feet with tears, I am wailing and crying," and immediately continues: "I bring hymns as [my] gift." Finally Clement states: "Wailing and moaning in [my] soul I bring Thee this hymn for redemption of my failures; accept it... grant forgiveness and permit me to become a dweller [lit. "one initiated"] of Paradise and a servant of [Thy] Highness."

This is surely a remarkable statement for a Byzantine poet of the early ninth century, indicating his high self-esteem, and pride in his skill.

### B. Other hymnographers and associated problems

We know many names of ninth-century hymnographers (Joseph, Theophanes, George and others) as well as numerous works attributed to them. The manuscript tradition of liturgical hymns is, however, far from simple: the works survived not in collections arranged by the authors (like the letters of Theodore Stoudite), but in liturgical books compiled for the needs of ecclesiastical service, in which poems are assigned to the festal days of the church calendar and often inserted between other, prose, texts: *Menaia* cover twelve months of the fixed cycle; *Triodia* contain the hymns for the Lenten and Easter part of the movable cycle; *Pentekostaria* deal with the fifty-day Pentecost period; in the *Oktoechos* or *Parakletike* are gathered hymns of the year arranged according to their musical mode. Other types of collections are those arranged thematically, such as *theotokaria*,<sup>12</sup> hymns addressing the Mother of God.

Hymns included in these collections are sometimes anonymous; in other cases they are attributed to certain poets or have acrostics indicating the author's name. It is here the problems begin: one and the same kanon may be attributed, in different manuscripts, to

<sup>12</sup> E. FOLLIERI, *Un Theotokarion Marciano del sec. XIV*, Rome 1961; repr. in *Archivio Italiano per la storia della pietà* III, 3, 1962.



different poets; in many cases these poets are unknown, and we have no data to establish their chronology; usually the names have no additional designation, and it is difficult to decide whether the collections preserve the works by one, two or three Josephs, and to which of these multiple Josephs each particular kanon can be attributed. The task of producing critical editions is far from complete, and scholars of hymnography are still lacking vital tools, with the result that attributions and chronology of poets remain dependent on personal taste rather than on factual evidence.

The following major hymnographers are usually placed within the chronological boundaries of the ninth century:

1. *Joseph, archbishop of Thessalonike*, Theodore of Stoudios' brother and staunch supporter, a victim of Leo V's persecutions, was not praised in any particular enkomion, nor was an entry in the main body of the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* devoted to him. He appears only in later additions (col. 820.35-44). He died in 832. In 844 the corpses of Theodore and Joseph were transferred to the Stoudios monastery, and on this occasion an anonymous speech in his honor was produced.<sup>13</sup>

2. *Joseph the Hymnographer* was a saint of the Byzantine church, and several *vitae* of him survived (BHG 944-947b), the earliest of which was written by a younger contemporary of his, named Theophanes.<sup>14</sup> It is hard to establish whether Theophanes wrote Joseph's *Vita* at the end of the ninth century<sup>15</sup> or at the beginning of the tenth.<sup>16</sup> It is impossible to identify the man with any certainty; there is no reason to see in him Theophanes of Sicily, himself a melode. M. Théarvic (S. Vailhé), who refuted this identification, suggested that the hagiographer was the same Theophanes who authored the description of the *translatio* of the patriarch Nikephoros' relics in the second half of the ninth century.<sup>17</sup> The second hagiographer, John the Deacon (PG 105, 939-975), was inspired by the work of Theophanes. G. Da Costa-Louillet believes him to have written his compilation some twenty years later, ca. 917, and tentatively identifies him as John

<sup>13</sup> For him see BECK, *Kirche*, 505f, as well as A. PHYTRAKES, Ἰωσήφ ὁ ὑμνογράφος καὶ Ἰωσήφ ὁ Στουδίτης, *EETHSA* 17, 1971, 347-350; A. LONGO in AHG 11, 1978, 579-581; FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 180\* n. 134.

<sup>14</sup> Published by A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Sbornik grečeskik i latinskih pamjatnikov, kasajuščihja Fotija patriarha* 2, St. Petersburg 1901, 1-14.

<sup>15</sup> Thus Eu. I. TOMADAKES, Ἰωσήφ ὁ ὑμνογράφος. Βίος καὶ ἔργον, Athens 1971, following Papadopoulos-Kerameus. For "barbarians", i.e. Slavs, in one kanon of Joseph see now N. OIKONOMIDES, St. Andrew, Joseph the Hymnographer and the Slavs of Patras, in O. ROSENQVIST (ed.), *Λεμῶν. Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, Uppsala 1996 [Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 6], 71-78.

<sup>16</sup> D. STIERNON, La vie et l'œuvre de s. Joseph l'Hymnographe, *REB* 31, 1973, 243-266.

<sup>17</sup> M. THÉARVIC, À propos de Théophane le Sicilien, *EO* 7, 1904, 31-34, 164-171.

Doxopatres. On the other hand, V. Grumel places John in the eleventh century.<sup>18</sup> John's stance seems to have been more pro-Photian than that of Theophanes.

Joseph, Sicilian by birth, was brought by his parents to the Peloponnese and then dwelt in Thessalonike before moving to Constantinople. He was a supporter of the patriarch Ignatios who appointed him *skeuophylax*. John the Deacon relates that Joseph was exiled "by a wretched emperor" (PG 105, 968A). E. Tomadakes assumes that the emperor in question was Basil I, and that Joseph's banishment resulted from his anti-Photian position; it is not impossible, however, that Joseph was a victim of Theophilos' persecutions of the Iconodules. Joseph died, so far as his *vitae* relate, in 886 or 883.

Numerous kanons "signed" by a Joseph survived but there is no secure evidence that allows us to distinguish between Joseph of Thessalonike and John the Hymnographer, and it is difficult to determine any distinguishing features of the language of Joseph the Hymnographer.<sup>19</sup> Usually most of the poems ascribed in manuscripts to Joseph are considered the Hymnographer's actual works;<sup>20</sup> E. Follieri and I. Dujčev attributed the *Hymn on the Bulgarian Martyrs* to the Stoudite's brother,<sup>21</sup> whereas Tomadakes thinks that even this poem was created by the Hymnographer.

The problem of identification is made worse by the possibility of the existence of a third Joseph: a kanon survived "signed" by Joseph and dedicated to Theodora of Thessalonike (ed. C. Nikas, AHG 8, 118-127). Since Theodora died in 892, neither the archbishop of Thessalonike nor the Hymnographer could have authored it. E. Kurtz, the first publisher of the kanon, conjectured that the poem was compiled by another man, one of the eleventh-century hymnographers of the circle of the Grottaferrata monastery,<sup>22</sup> but many scholars adhere to the view that the kanon was the Hymnographer's work.

Another name common in kanon acrostics is Theophanes.

3. *Theophanes Graptos* (the "tattooed") and his brother *Theodore* were heroes of the anti-Iconoclastic resistance. Born in the region of Moab, Theophanes dwelt as a monk in the Lavra of St. Sabas. In 813 the brothers followed Michael Synkellos on a mission to Rome, but for unknown reasons stopped in Constantinople where they defended icon

<sup>18</sup> G. DA COSTA LOUILLET, Saints de Constantinople aux VIIIe, IXe et Xe siècles, *Byzantion* 25-27, 1955/7, 814; V. GRUMEL, La mosaïque de Dieu Sauveur au monastère du Latome à Thessalonique, *EO* 29, 1930, 168. Stiernon (as in n. 16) suggests that he might be the same deacon John who produced a tract in defense of the cult of icons.

<sup>19</sup> See an attempt by N. B. TOMADAKES, La lingua di Giuseppe Innografo, *Byzantino-Sicula* 2, Palermo 1975, 497-506.

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, A. LUZZI, Un canone inedito di Giuseppe Innografo per un gruppo di martiri occidentali ed i suoi rapporti con il testo dei Sinassari, *RSBN* 30, 1993, 31-80.

<sup>21</sup> E. FOLLIERI-I. DUJČEV, Un'acolutia inedita per i martiri di Bulgaria dell'anno 813, *Byzantion* 33, 1963, 71-106.

<sup>22</sup> E. KURTZ, *Des Klerikers Gregorios Bericht über Leben, Wundertaten und Translation der heiligen Theodora von Thessalonike*, St. Petersburg 1902, XVII.

reverence.<sup>23</sup> The emperor Theophilos invented an outlandish form of punishment for them, ordering that iambic lines be inscribed with burning iron on their foreheads (hence their sobriquet). Theophanes died in 825. A certain Theophanes of Caesarea, the author of some other panegyrics and a contemporary of Photios according to J. M. Featherstone, wrote an *Enkomion of Theodore Graptos*<sup>24</sup> in which Theophanes is also mentioned. Despite the author's chronological proximity to the hero the *Enkomion* is poor in biographical data. In the tenth century, Symeon Metaphrastes compiled the *vita* of Theodore basing his narrative on Theophanes of Caesarea and supplementing it with only meager additional information.

4. *Theophanes of Sicily* is usually distinguished from the Graptos, even though it is difficult to draw a clear line between the two or even to establish the time when Theophanes of Sicily worked. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus attributed to him the *Kanon for Beryllus*,<sup>25</sup> bishop of Catania; C. Giannelli doubts this attribution but sees in him the author of some other poems.<sup>26</sup> It is highly doubtful whether the problem of "Theophanes" will ever be conclusively solved.

5. *Sergios*' is an even more obscure case. In manuscripts we find hymns ascribed to Sergios without any further identification, as well as to Sergios of Constantinople, Sergios the Logothete, Sergios the Hagiopolite, and Sergios the Monk.<sup>27</sup> No biographical data of these poets are available unless we identify Sergios of Constantinople as the patriarch Sergios I (610-38). J. Darrouzès places Sergios the Monk in the tenth century;<sup>28</sup> a *kanon* attributed to him is merely a bald list of saints' names for the entire year.<sup>29</sup> Sergios the Hagiopolite (a monk of Mar Saba?) is dated by S. Eustratiades in the eighth or ninth centuries<sup>30</sup> simply on the grounds that he followed the form developed by Damaskenos

<sup>23</sup> S. VAILHÉ, Saint Michel le Syncelle et les deux frères Grapti, saint Théodore and saint Théophane, *ROC* 6, 1901, 313-332, 610-642. See on him A. KOMINIS, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν ἱερὸν ἐπιγράμμα καὶ οἱ ἐπιγραμματοποιοί*, Athens 1966, 123f. According to C. A. TRYPANIS, *Greek Poetry from Homer to Seferis*, Chicago 1981, 443, his verse is "long-winded, bombastic and dry".

<sup>24</sup> BHG 1745z; ed. J. M. FEATHERSTONE, The Praise of Theodore Graptos by Theophanes of Caesarea, *AB* 98, 1980, 93-150.

<sup>25</sup> A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Θεοφάνης Σικελός, *BZ* 9, 1900, 370-378.

<sup>26</sup> C. GIANNELLI, L'ultimo umanesimo nell'Italia meridionale, *SBN* 10, 1963, 313f. Cf. A. ACCONCIA LONGO in *AHG* 11, 1978, 598 n. 2. E. FOLLIERI, Santa Agrippina nella innografia e nella agiografia greca, *Byzantino-Sicula* 2, 1975, 231-250, attributes the *Kanon for Agrippina* to the Graptos.

<sup>27</sup> FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 301f.

<sup>28</sup> J. DARROUZÈS, Les calendriers byzantins en vers, *REB* 16, 1958, 73-76.

<sup>29</sup> M. I. GEDEON, Ἀναγνώσεις ἐκ τοῦ Ὡρολογίου τῆς τῶν Ἀκομήτων μονῆς, *Ekklesiastike Aletheia* 27, 1903, 392-324, 401f., 447f., 455f.

<sup>30</sup> S. EUSTRATIADES, Σέργιος ὁ Ἀγιοπολίτης, *Nea Sion* 33, 1938, 625. Not "7. oder 8.", as BECK, *Kirche*, 518, says.

and Kosmas (Eustratiades published the *heirmoi* of three *kanons* by Sergios).<sup>31</sup> Naturally, no conclusion can be drawn from such slender evidence.

6. *Elias* was a name shared by several melodists.<sup>32</sup> Their identification is problematic and the dates of their lives can be calculated only conjecturally. An Elias who referred to the Arab attacks (on Sicily?) may have lived in the ninth century.

The hymns "signed" by other poets are less numerous than those by Joseph and Theophanes and the existing biographical data on them are minimal. With some exceptions (such as Kassia and the patriarch Methodios whom we shall discuss separately), these hymnographers are no more than names accompanied by a handful of poems, in some cases even by a single piece.<sup>33</sup>

The *kanon* acquired its established form in the works of the ninth-century hymnographers: nine odes (the second ode usually omitted) were linked to traditional themes (see above, p. 111-114); each ode was terminated by a *theotokion* (often not connected with the main body of the poem either in its content or vocabulary); and refrains were included in some odes (especially in the seventh and/or eighth) which, like *theotokia*, acquired independent existence and were transferred from one poem to another, from one author to another. Thus the refrain "Praised be the God of our ancestors" appears in many hymns of Theophanes, as well as in Joseph's *kanon On Orestes and Companions*. It is noteworthy that Clement either completely avoided using refrains or applies them in just rudimentary form. Only in five of his hymns are refrains developed. The acrostic becomes a regular element of the *kanon*, and it often contains the author's name ("signature").

We have seen that from the end of the eighth century onward, two political themes penetrated both hagiography and historiography: icon worship and the Arab (and, in a broader sense, the "barbarian") menace. Naturally, the Iconodulic theme occupies an important place also in the hymnographic repertoire, some poets (Joseph of Thessalonike, Theophanes Graptos) having been among the saintly heroes of the anti-Iconoclastic movement. Theophanes praised the icons of Christ and of the Virgin, and was especially eloquent while eulogizing contemporary Iconodules: Joseph of Thessalonike, he says,

<sup>31</sup> S. EUSTRATIADES, *Εἰρημολόγιον*, Chennevières-sur-Marne 1932, nos. 61, 167 and 269.

<sup>32</sup> C. EMEREAU, Hymnographi byzantini, *EO* 22, 1923, 420, distinguishes Elias of Crete or Ekdikos (of the twelfth century?), Elias of Jerusalem, Elias the Monk and Elias the Synkellos; cf. FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 266.

<sup>33</sup> There are lists of Byzantine hymnographers starting with the work of C. EMEREAU, Hymnographi byzantini, *EO* 21, 1922, 258-279; 22, 1923, 11-25, 420-439; 23, 1924, 196-200, 276-285, 408-414; 24, 1925, 164-179; 25, 1926, 178-184. Revised lists can be found in the works by Beck and Szövérfy cited above several times.

venerated images and likenesses of saints (AHG 11, 280.190-192);<sup>34</sup> John Psychaites worshipped "the divine likeness of Christ" and the icons of saints (AHG 9, 274.70-72); Theodore of Ankyra set up "the revered likeness of Christ" in the church (AHG 3, 149.81-84) and venerated the symbols of Christ's dispensation painted on boards (p. 153.177-180). Joseph [the Hymnographer?] also defended the cult of icons, but his vocabulary seems less developed than that of Theophanes, let alone Clement's. It is tempting to assume that this wane of Iconodulic zeal resulted from Joseph's chronological distance from the peak of the struggle in the days of Leo V, but it is impossible to prove such a claim.

In contrast, the theme of barbarian attacks, rare in Clement's poetry, becomes more frequent in Joseph. "Paraskeve," he exclaims (AHG 11, 495.212-216), "please, implore the Lord to relieve your servants from ordeal and oppression and attacks of foreign barbarians." He asks the Virgin to liberate "us" from "barbaric" (i. e. Slavic) captivity (AHG 6, 296.201-202), and the saint Mariamne to give victory to the emperor and to destroy the phalanxes of the foe (p. 298.253-258). In some hymns, Joseph directly names the Arabs ("the sons of Hagar") as a dangerous enemy. Another group of hymns written by Joseph is addressed to the Mother of God as protectress of Constantinople and is connected, possibly, with the Russian attack on the Byzantine capital.<sup>35</sup>

It was probably Theophanes [of Sicily?] who authored the kanon *On Marcian of Syracuse*, in which he praises the saint for his help to Syracuse against "the tempest of barbarians",<sup>36</sup> as well as the kanon *On Leo of Catania*: there the poet implores the Virgin to destroy the Hagarenes and to deliver the cities (AHG 6, 332.229-230). We find similar motifs in the poems by Theophanes [Graptos?] and some anonymous hymnographers.

Unlike Clement, other contemporary hymnographers often concentrate on festive elements of the cult of saints: celebration of their memory, relics, and the miraculous workings of the tomb. Thus in the vocabulary of Joseph we regularly encounter, besides the μνήμη, memory (the term common to Theophanes as well), such notions as the annual festival, the brilliantly shining πανήγυρις which is celebrated "today", the tomb, coffin and relics. In many hymns, these motifs merge: in the kanon *On Donatus of Euroia* (AHG 12, 90.190, 91.228-232, etc.), the poet celebrates "the all-festive commemoration", the saint's coffin that works miracles and his shrine. In the kanon *On Demes and Protion*, Joseph speaks three times of commemoration, as well as of the saint's coffin, reliquary and bodily remains (AHG 8, 159.59, 161.12, etc.). In his kanon *On Elizabeth* we read about πανήγυ-

<sup>34</sup> We shall cite here primarily the critical editions in AHG since they are reliable and convenient.

<sup>35</sup> E. MIONI, I kontakia inediti di Giuseppe Innografo, *BollBadGr* 2, 1948, 94. Cf. A. KAZHDAN, Joseph the Hymnographer and the First Russian Attack on Constantinople, in J. P. MAHÉ-R. THOMSON (eds.), *From Byzantium to Iran*, Atlanta Ga 1997, 187-196.

<sup>36</sup> S. TARQUINI, Teofane Siculo: Canone per s. Marciano di Siracusa, in E. FOLLIERI, *Theotocarion*, 276.214-215.

ρις, relics, tomb, coffin and her body which remained uncorrupted after the burial (AHG 8, 300.275-279, etc.).

Whereas Clement rarely touches upon the motif of light, φῶς (see above), this metaphor is intensively developed in Theophanes' kanons *On Romanos the Melode*,<sup>37</sup> *On Beryllos of Sicily*, *On Marcian of Syracuse* and many others, although not in all his poems. Joseph is generous with epithets connected with the concept of light. In the *Hymn on Phantinos the Elder*, he applies to the saint, in a single phrase, three terms based on three distinct roots designating brilliance: ταῖς φωτοβόλοις αὐγαῖς πυρσευόμενος.<sup>38</sup> Orestes and his Companions are divine luminaries confined in the darkest prison: they shine in the darkness like a torch (AHG 10, 29.113-114, 124-126). Joseph begins his *Hymn on Gregory in Akritas* with a string of words such as "illumination", "enlighten", "light-bearing memory",<sup>39</sup> and in the first *heirmos* of his kanon *On Hilarios*, we meet "light-emitting rays", "light-bearing festival", and the verb "to enlighten" (AHG 8, 97.1-6). While in Clement light is predominantly a quality of divinity, other ninth-century hymnographers connect it with the saint as well.

What distinguishes Theophanes and Joseph from Clement is primarily their indifference to "historicity". The image of the saint is usually constructed of word-concepts and epithets, and their "biographies" consist of stereotypes: the struggle against idols and demons, ordeal (tortures, whippings, furnace, blood, hunger, the stadium and so forth) and final spiritual victory. Even some saints who in medieval tradition acquired elaborate biographies look shadowy in hymns. Thus in Theophanes' kanon *On Peter the Apostle* the only "historical" detail is a reference to Peter's command "to fish for men" (AHG 5, 261.149), while "deconcretized" and evaluating characterizations prevail: Peter is the *corypheus* of apostles, the chosen apostle, the foundation of the church, the guardian of the keys to heaven. Theophanes delineates the role of Demetrios in metaphysical, not historical terms: the saint is liberator and guardian (AHG 2, 308.56-57) of his city, defender against dangers, trials, evil, abuse; he is the source of healing, the soldier against ailments and passions. Only once does a more or less historical feature emerge: Demetrios repels the attacks of enemies now as in the past (p. 310.104-105).

Some poems are more "historical", but Theophanes is far removed from Clement's interest in details of his heroes' behavior. Even in hymns on contemporary defenders of icons, "historicity" is feebly expressed. Peter of Nicaea is a supporter of icon worship, an adversary of heretics, and defies the gaping mouth of lions (AHG 1, 221.48-52, etc.) — a hint at Leo III or Leo V; at some stage he was exiled. All this seems "historical", but eulogies of other Iconodules are built of the same elements: John Psychaites also fought heresy (AHG 9, 271.38, etc.), was exiled and defeated the insolence of lions. There is no

<sup>37</sup> PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Θεοφάνης Σικελός, 377.9 and 39.

<sup>38</sup> E. FOLLIERI, Un canone di Giuseppe Innografo per s. Fantino 'il Vecchio' di Tauriana, *REB* 19, 1961, 140.10.

<sup>39</sup> Th. E. DETORAKES, Ἀνέκδοτος ἀκολουθία Γρηγορίου τοῦ ἐν Ἀκρίτῃ, *EEBS* 36, 1968, 143.1-7.

"historicity" in the kanon *On Theosteriktos* except a line about the struggle against heresy (AHG 6, 303.107), and, in order to laud Theophilos of Ephesus, the poet uses a fossilized metaphor: the saint chased away the wolves from the church with the help of the sling of Orthodoxy (AHG 1, 319.53-56).

Joseph is probably the most forceful supplicant for personal salvation. In some of his kanons the formula of personal appeal comes interwoven with the soliciting of general "liberation": in the kanon *On Susannah*, he begs the Virgin (and through her the Lord) to relieve those who venerate her from bondage to passions and the Devil (AHG 1, 271.49-52, 272.78-80); at the same time he expects that the Virgin will transform into brilliance the darkness of his heart (p. 276.182-183). In other poems Joseph berates his own vices and asks for individual recovery: "O Virgin," he exclaims, "cure one who is now disabled by the evil dragon and enslaved by sin."<sup>40</sup> Joseph describes his predicament in terms of a tempest at sea or an abyss, and his only hope is divine help that will lead him to the harbor of salvation. The kanon *On Akakios of Melitene* is full of his entreaties: he asks the saint to rescue him from evil (AHG 8, 200.5, cf. 208.195-200), and petitions the Virgin to remove the passions of his heart, to open for him the gates of repentance, to resuscitate him, a dead man, to give light to him who is obscured by evil, who is ruined by a flood of sins, whose mind is wandering and heart swollen, and who is in spiritual poverty.

The tempest and darkness may be well interpreted within the framework of an ethical and metaphysical predicament. But in the *Kanon on Mark the Apostle*, Joseph pleads that he be rescued from "secular scandals and trials" (AHG 8, 306.74-77), and this seems to imply something more than an inner struggle with the poet's spiritual vicissitudes; the more so since in the concluding ode of the same kanon Joseph expresses his desire to be separated from "treacherous and harmful friendships". Besides the cliché of seeking protection "from visible and invisible foes", we find in his poetry a more specific formula: Save me from demons and "lawless men" (AHG 4, 79.67-68). And probably when Joseph asked to be rescued from "dangers" and especially from captivity (AHG 5, 381.112-115, 6: 258.54-56) and hostile slavery (AHG 6, 263.152-155), he had real misfortunes in mind.

Theophanes speaks less about his individual plight, seldom permitting himself allusions to material dangers. In the kanon *On Mary of Egypt*, he asks the Theotokos to liberate him from accusations (ἐγκλήματα) (AHG 8, 63.189-190); in the kanon *On Theophilos of Ephesus*, he inserts, among various metaphysical solicitations, a request to be rescued from prison (AHG 1, 320.92).

Hymnographers of the ninth century were concerned with public salvation, both metaphysical (from sins) and political (from barbarians and ecclesiastical controversy); they also continued the tradition of the *Megas Kanon*, worrying about their individual destiny. None of them, however, reached Clement's bold request—to enter Paradise as a reward for their poetic achievement.

<sup>40</sup> S. EUSTRATIADES, 'Ο ἅγιος Θεόδοτος ἐπίσκοπος Κυρηναίας, *Apostolos Barnabas* 4, 1932, 10.36-39.

Clement was the most individual of the poets of his age, the least stereotyped and abstract. The regular kanon was a liturgical, public event, leaving little room for personal emotions. The goal was to celebrate, to praise the martyrdom, to overcome evil with the help of the saints' material remains—to participate rather than describe. But it would be mistaken to see kanons (and not only Clement's!) as little more than a collection of independent pious exclamations loosely strung together. Let us examine two in order to grasp the general pattern of this particular hymnographical discourse.

The first is the kanon *On Eustochios and Companions* by Joseph (AHG 10, 129-139). The *heirmos* to ode 1 begins with an address to the martyrs, immediately introducing the theme of light. Then the poet says that his heroes are athletes who labored for Christ and destroyed the contrivances of the foes. It would seem that the entire topic has been exhausted in ode 1, but in fact it is no more than an introduction to the theme: the rest of the kanon serves to specify the known elements of the image, separately and developmentally (in "movement"). Odes 3 and 4 depict the martyrs individually, adding that they were "armed with divine might". Then the motif of ordeal comes to the fore: the poet speaks of the sea of tortures, of the gallows, sword, blood and death. From ode 6 on, Joseph introduces an optimistic note, beginning the *heirmos* with a simile: "As unfading roses" the martyrs offer themselves as a sacrifice to Christ. Then follow the concept of God's law and the motif of victory which dominates ode 8. The author repeats after ode 1 that the saints "dispersed the contrivances of the foe", and in the final ode they are triumphant: the vengeful spirit is smashed, the darkness dissipated, and the faithful celebrate the shining festival.

The other is the kanon *On Akepsimas and Companions* by Theophanes. They suffered martyrdom in Persia (AHG 3, 100-110). Again, the *heirmos* to ode 1 begins with the theme of light that fights darkness. The topic is especially appropriate in this case, since Akepsimas was active in the dualistic Persian environment. Ode 1 includes two more important points: the immanent interconnection of the martyrs (they were three) with the Trinity and the sea of their sufferings, paralleling the sea of tortures in Joseph's *Kanon on Eustochios*. The following text is first and foremost a contrast of their ordeal and salvation. In odes 3 and 4 the martyrdom is traced out in vague and general terms, the motif of ordeal being mitigated by the eulogy of the martyrs' disdain of earth and desire to approach the Lord, which then leads to the apotheosis in ode 5 summarized in a concise formula for the saint: the vessel of the saving truth. Again, everything seems to have been said, but Theophanes begins to describe anew the ordeal, this time in more concrete form: the head severed from the body, pelting stones, beating by staves. And interwoven with the imagery of ordeal goes the motif of salvation, beautifully expressed in a series of oppositions: the soul in contrast to the headless body, the rock of life in contrast to the pelted stones, and the cross, the staff of might, in contrast to the beating staves. In ode 7, Theophanes returns to the theme of the *heirmos* in ode 1, only instead of light he deals now with fire (πῦρ), the basic element of Persian dualistic religion. The poet is not satisfied with this implied opposition—light and fire—but contrasts fire to the divine dew and to the holy fire set up

by the martyrs. To the cult of fire he opposes the veneration of the Sun [of justice]. Ode 8 is triumphant: no fire, no whips, no beasts were able to divert the martyrs from their love of God. And ode 9 comprises a conclusion based on the theme of light-fire: the martyrs are luminaries, the glowing coal of Isaiah, beacon-lights destroying "the dark worship of fire".

The composition of both hymns is tripartite, consisting of introduction, development of the theme, conclusion. Basic to this composition is the linear unity of movement, from a general statement to a detailed picture, unity supported by the game of contrasting images which divide but do not disrupt the presentation.

In some cases hymnographers experimented with the compositional pattern. Thus Theophanes' kanon *On the Annunciation* (Christ-Paranikas, *AnthCarm*, 236-42) has an unusual, complex structure, consisting of three parts arranged around three separate acrostics of which the third has an artificial (reversed alphabetical) order going from  $\omega$  to  $\alpha$ . The second section (ode 8) has a refrain "All the creatures of the Lord, praise the Lord," and the third section (ode 9) — "Hail, woman full of grace, the Lord is with you." Both refrains are repeated six times each. The kanon contains a short prologue, epilogue (ode 9) and the main text — a dialogue between Gabriel and Mary, the core of which (as in the sermon by Germanos [see above, p. 61-63]) is Mary's search for understanding of the mystery of the "seedless" conception. The turning point is ode 6, in which Mary accepts the Annunciation, followed by the theme of light (illumination) in ode 7: the paradox is resolved, exclaims Gabriel, and we have to believe in what the mortal tongue is unable to express.

Hymns are rhetorical. One frequently used figure is play on words, usually the materialization of the intrinsic meaning of a name, sometimes simple (Leo of Catania compared with a lion [AHG 6, 325.89-90]), sometimes intricate: Antipas, says a poet, you gainsay ( $\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\iota\pi\alpha\varsigma$ ) and resist (AHG 8, 137.57-59); Peter of Nicaea is not only the rock ( $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\alpha$ ) of faith but also a foundation and an edifice of virtues made up of selectively selected stones ( $\lambda\acute{\iota}\theta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ ) (AHG 1, 219.1-4). Tautology grows into a list of objects or definitions: the saint, says Theophanes, was a priest, one initiated, a legislator, the sage soothsayer, imitator of the Lord, fellow sufferer (AHG 11, 388.147-149). Conversely, Joseph accumulates synonyms expressing the same idea: comparing Beryllos with a lamb he calls him  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\beta\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$ ,  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\nu\acute{o}\varsigma$ , one of the  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\upsilon\epsilon\varsigma$  (AHG 7, 236.165-172), while in the *Kanon on an Earthquake*, he begins with an abstract "divine nod ( $\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$ )", moves to physical agitation ( $\kappa\lambda\omicron\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ) and ends with moral quaking ( $\delta\omicron\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ) of the hearts of all the inhabitants of the Earth (Christ-Paranikas, *AnthCarm*, 243.37-39). Parallelism of constructions (*isokola*) is typical of hymnology. It can be elaborated as, for instance, "the divinely woven net of your words... the dewy wisdom of your words" (the English translation looses the original sound:  $\theta\epsilon\omicron\pi\lambda\acute{o}\kappa\omega \sigma\alpha\gamma\acute{\eta}\gamma\eta \sigma\omicron\upsilon \tau\acute{\omega}\nu \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omega\nu$ ...  $\delta\omicron\omicron\sigma\omicron\beta\acute{o}\lambda\omega \sigma\omicron\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha \sigma\omicron\upsilon \tau\acute{\omega}\nu \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omega\nu$ ) (AHG 2, 226.144 and 151). It can be braced by incipient rhymes:

my soul's wounds ( $\tau\rho\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ ),  
my thought's errors ( $\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\tau\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ ),

my body's ailments ( $\nu\omicron\sigma\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ ) (AHG 8, 138.84-86).

Poets played with sounds, using alliteration (e.g. AHG 9, 38.3-6) and assonance such as "fantasies dispelled ( $\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\upsilon\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ ) by truth ( $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ )" (AHG 12, 31.222-224). Ninth-century hymnography was a sophisticated literary genre.

Apart from hymnography, little survived from Byzantine poetry of this period. Some of the poetic works are anonymous, others attributed to persons whose identification remains questionable. An example is a long epigram on the biblical David who is compared to Orpheus, "much admired by the Hellenes." The lemma gives the name of the author, a certain Arsenios, but it is far from clear who this Arsenios was. Even if we assume, together with E. Follieri,<sup>41</sup> that he lived in the early ninth century he may be identified with three different monks known from the correspondence of Theodore of Stoudios, while he could equally be a fourth and otherwise unknown Arsenios. We are on firmer chronological ground with a poem in dodecasyllables on the victory of the patriarch Nikephoros over his three foes (the emperor Leo V and the two Iconoclastic patriarchs Theodotos and John the Grammatikos?). According to I. Ševčenko, the iambs in question cannot be far removed from the epoch of the patriarch Theodotos (815-21).<sup>42</sup> More significant is the literary heritage of Kassia (see below, p. 315-326) and of the famous scholar Leo the Mathematician, or the Wise, to whom we shall dedicate some words in chapter 12 (p. 382f.).

<sup>41</sup> E. FOLLIERI, Un carme giambico in onore di Davide, *SBN* 9, 1957, 108-116.

<sup>42</sup> I. ŠEVČENKO, The Anti-Iconoclastic Poem in the Pantocrator Psalter, *Cahiers Archéologiques* 15, 1965, 39-60.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SEMI-SECULAR VITAE: THE *VITAE* OF ST. PHILARETOS THE MERCIFUL AND ANTONY THE YOUNGER

#### *A. Vita of St. Philaretos (BHG 1511z-1512b)\**

The *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful* (or *Almsgiver*) was written by the saint's grandson Niketas of the Paphlagonian village of Amnia. It survived in two recensions represented by two main manuscripts: Paris. Bibl. Nat. 1510 dated by A. Vasiliev to the tenth century<sup>1</sup> and Genoa Bibl. Franz. 34 usually dated to the eleventh century;<sup>2</sup> K. Bonis, however, prefers a later date, the twelfth century, for both manuscripts.<sup>3</sup> According to L. Rydén, the Genoa manuscript preserves the earlier and the Paris version a revised recension; he thinks

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\* The first version of this chapter was published as A. KAZHDAN - L. SHERRY, The Tale of a Happy Fool: The Vita of St. Philaretos the Merciful, *Byzantion* 66, 1996, 351-362.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. A. VASILIEV, Žitie Filareta Milostivogo, *Izvestija Russkago Arheologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole* 5, 1900, 64-86.

<sup>2</sup> M.-H. FOURMY-M. LEROY, La vie de s. Philarète, *Byzantion* 9, 1934, 85-170. At present a team of Swedish scholars is preparing a new edition of the *Vita*, see L. RYDÉN-J. O. ROSENQVIST-S. RYDÄ, Filaretos den Barmhärtiges vita: ett editionsprojekt i tre delar, *Bysantska sällskapet. Bulletin* 13, 1995, 18-28.

<sup>3</sup> K. BONIS, Zur Frage der besonderen Verehrung des Philaretos Philanthropenus (Eleemon) unter den orthodoxen Slaven, in J. DUMMER-J. IRMSCHER-K. TREU (eds.), *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Berlin 1981 [TU 125], 95-98.



that the revision took place in the tenth century, in the same *milieu* which produced the *Vita of St. Andrew the Fool*.<sup>4</sup>

Both recensions represent more or less the same story, although some details (and some figures) differ in them. Two major points of distinction may be indicated: firstly, the Genoa version contains numerous vernacular words and technical terms (e.g., βουτίον, τζανκίον, ῥόγα, τατά) omitted in the Paris version or replaced by regular or periphrastic renderings, and secondly, the Genoa version is more family oriented than its counterpart. Thus only the Genoa version has the epilogue naming Niketas as the author, and describes Niketas' behavior at his grandfather's deathbed (Fourmy-Leroy, 155-159), while the list of Philaretos' family in the Genoa manuscript is more detailed than that of the Paris version (Fourmy-Leroy, 141.16-29; Vasiliev, 76.30-33).

But it would be hasty to conclude that the Paris version is just a revision of the Genoa recension. Even Rydén has indicated a number of cases in which the Paris manuscript gives a better reading. Of course, these cases might be explained as the editorial corrections of a more literate reviser. It is harder to understand, however, why a literate reviser would systematically distort biblical citations correctly rendered in the Paris version: he replaced φάγη of *Gen.* 3.19 by ἐσθίει (Vasiliev, 66.13), ἀσθενούντων of *Acts* 20.35 by ἀσθενῶν (p. 66.14), and paraphrased *II Thess.* 3.10 (p. 66.15), whereas the Paris recension gives a precise quotation. The existence in several passages of the "revised" recension of some names lacking in the Genoa manuscripts is also enigmatic: among them is Maria, the saint's granddaughter and one of the major characters of the story (Vasiliev, 77.5 and 26), Staurakios, a favorite of the emperors (p. 77.17-18, 24), and the beautiful daughter of the rich *stratelates* Gerontianos, Maria's major rival (p. 77.2-3), who appears in the Genoa version a little later (Fourmy-Leroy, 141.35; Vasiliev, 77.7-8). Only the Paris recension includes a short preamble, whereas the Genoa version begins in medias res: "There was in the region of the Paphlagonians a man Philaretos by name." And it is not very likely that the reviser replaced a traditional title Βίος καὶ πολιτεία ("Life and conduct") by a less common one, "A useful tale (διήγησις) about the life and exploits."

The phenomenon of doublets is one of the riddles of Byzantine literary tradition. We have already met, and shall continue to meet doublets among both hagiographical and historical discourses, the existence of which requires the introduction of hypothetical lost common sources or even "dossiers". Until the problem finds a convincing and generally acceptable solution it is safer to accept only the simple fact that the *Vita of Philaretos* exists in two versions, one more "demotic" and another more "literary". Since we do not know the original we shall draw on both versions in the following discussion.

As for Niketas, the author of the *Vita of Philaretos*, we know only what little he reveals in its epilogue (and in the text itself): he calls himself the godson of his grandfather (Fourmy-Leroy, 157.11, 161.29, 165.19-20); his father was John, Philaretos' elder son (p.

<sup>4</sup> L. RYDÉN, The Revised Version of the 'Life of St. Philaretos' and the 'Life of St. Andreas Salus', *AB* 100, 1982, 485-495; cf. also, J. O. ROSENQVIST, Changing Styles and Changing Mentalities, in Ch. HØGEL (ed.), *Metaphrasis*, Bergen 1996, 44-46.

141.25-28); as a boy he spent ten years at home learning the commandments of his grandfather; when he turned eighteen, he fled (ἀπέδρασα) from his home and became monk. Twenty years passed, and in 821/2 he wrote a "tale" about his grandfather's virtues, at a time when he was in exile (ἐξορία) in Karioupolis in the southern Peloponnesus (p. 165.20-29). If we believe his information, Niketas was born in 785 in Amnia; ca. 788 he followed his grandfather to Constantinople; he became a monk ca. 801/2 (contrary to the will of his family?); he was probably detained (after Leo V's murder in 820?) and then banished to the Peloponnese.<sup>5</sup>

Niketas was a contemporary of Theodore of Stoudios and a monk like the great Stoudite, but nevertheless he completely neglects two major themes which were central to Theodore's literary activity. Icons are neither directly mentioned nor alluded to in his "tale", although he does praise, in passing, Irene (the restorer of icon veneration) as "Christ-loving" empress. Moreover, when chastising the false poor who conceal money in their houses but keep to the old habit of soliciting, Niketas uses the terms "greediness and idolatry" to describe their behavior, adding: "Any extravagance of means (περισσὸν τῆς χρείας) is greediness and idolatry" (Fourmy-Leroy, 149.25-29; Vasiliev, 79.28-32). The passage may not constitute sufficient evidence on which to base far-reaching conclusions, but it is hard to forget that the accusation of idolatry was a powerful tool in the hands of the Iconoclasts.<sup>6</sup> Even more surprising is Niketas' neglect of the fate of his cousin Maria, Constantine VI's spouse, whose divorce caused such heated dispute at the turn of the century in which Theodore of Stoudios, the relative of Maria's rival Theodote, played such a remarkable part. Niketas, it seems, was not concerned with the political brawls of his day.

The *Vita of Philaretos* is an outstanding monument not only because of its vernacular ("low style") hue as preserved in the Genoa version, correlating with the *Chronicle* of Theophanes and with *Scriptor incertus*, but first and foremost because of its considerable literary qualities.<sup>7</sup>

The composition of the *Vita* is unusually strict. It consists of three parts each of which is self-contained. They form a "dialectical" triad: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The first section describes the life of the hero and his family in the village of Amnia; the second is the tale about Maria, the Byzantine Cinderella, who won a beauty contest and married the emperor Constantine VI; and the third sketches Philaretos' behavior at the court of his son-in-law.

The first section ("thesis") is the story of Philaretos' impoverishment brought on by his acts of generosity. After a short introduction depicting the wealth inherited by the saint

<sup>5</sup> P. YANNOPOULOS, Παρατηρήσεις στο Βίο του ἁγίου Φιλαρέτου, *Byzantina* 13/1, 1985, 490f.

<sup>6</sup> ŠEVČENKO (*Ideology*, pt. V, 18f), following V. Vasil'evskij interpreted Philaretos' *Vita* as a "non-Iconodulic text". "The only image", says ŠEVČENKO, "referred to in the *Vita* is the lauraton, or the model portrait of an imperial bride."

<sup>7</sup> On its literary virtues, see L. RYDÉN, Überlegungen zum literarischen Wert oder Unwert hagiographischer Texte, *Eranos* 91, 1993, 52-54. Cf. YANNOPOULOS, Παρατηρήσεις, 492-499.

from his father, there follows a set of episodes showing how he frittered away all his fortune. The first step is presented in a general way: the Devil made Philaretos dissipate all his enormous riches through donations to the poor, losses to the raiding Ishmaelites, and seizures of his lands by neighbors. Niketas lists what was left to his grandfather: a team of oxen, a horse, a donkey, a cow with a calf, bee-hives, a slave and a maid. Then step by step Philaretos gives away all the remaining items of his inherited wealth: his oxen to a peasant whose animal had perished, his horse to a warrior summoned to the muster, his cow with her calf to a poor neighbor, his donkey loaded with grain to a hungry man.

The episodes succeed each other without pause, without theological or doctrinal digressions, with cinematographical speed, so to speak. Indeed, the idea of speed is emphasized by the rapid movement (as in the *Martyrdom of the Sabaites*) of characters, humans and animals alike: the *stratiotes* Mousoulios came to Philaretos running (δρομαίως; no such adverb in the Genoa version), the cow ran (ἔδρομε) to her calf, Theosebo observed the haste (σπεύσας) of her husband.

The hagiographical discourse commonly consists of episodes that are more or less independent or bound by external and accidental links. In contrast to this, the episodes in the first section of the *Vita of Philaretos* are cohesively tied; they form a "system", a ladder that appears to lead ever downwards, but in fact takes the subject upward, to the heavenly summit: casting off his earthly wealth Philaretos thereby furnishes himself with the eternal reward.

What makes the *Vita* a masterpiece is the complexity of its story, linear but interrupted by artistic suspense: the eternal reward has to wait; before entering Paradise the saint undergoes a radical change of situation, earns sudden material compensation. Niketas fully understands this material movement of the plot, making Philaretos spell out to the members of his family the three steps of their fate: "Some of you remember the physical wealth we used to possess, as well as the poverty that God lately inflicted upon us, and the new wealth we enjoy now" (Fourmy-Leroy, 153.16-19; Vasiliev, 81.22-24). The "new wealth" was acquired due to the "fortunate" marriage of Maria. The second section ("antithesis") is divided from the preceding part by a clear-cut introductory formula: "At that time Christ-loving Irene ruled (the Paris manuscript bears the feminine form βασιλευούσης while the Genoa version contains the masculine βασιλεύοντος) with her son, the emperor Constantine" (Fourmy-Leroy, 135.24-25; Vasiliev, 74.18-19). The core of the "antithesis" is the regaining of material wealth by Philaretos and his family, the external *sujet* being the bride-show arranged for Constantine VI, the beauty contest won by Maria. The historicity of the Byzantine bride-show has been hotly discussed by scholars,<sup>8</sup> but this is hardly relevant for our discussion—we are dealing here with the *Vita* as a piece of literature, and, regardless of how the actual marriage of Constantine and Maria was

<sup>8</sup> See, among other works, P. SPECK, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer Fremden und der Versuch seiner eigenen Herrschaft. Quellenkritische Darstellung von 25 Jahren byzantinischer*

celebrated, the story of a Cinderella brought from rural poverty to the imperial throne is a folklore tale. Certainly, Maria's fate does not fully coincide with the traditional Cinderella-myth (there is no evil step-mother here, nor envious sister<sup>9</sup>), but the core of the legend, the naive belief in the possibility of a sudden elevation, is clearly elaborated. Maria surpasses barriers different from those of the traditional Cinderella, but she also encounters obstacles which her destiny helps her to overcome.

The bride-show section of the *Vita* is very dramatic, consisting of several high points and low points. First of all, the emperor's envoys arrived at Amnia and decided to stay in Philaretos' impoverished home which nevertheless seemed to be the largest and the best in the village. The saint immediately commanded his wife Theosebo to cook a "good dinner". But here was the first hurdle, since because of his generous alms-giving not a single hen was left in the household, and the woman, weary of Philaretos' extravagance, retorted: "Cook wild greens [lit. vegetables] and regale the envoys!" Disaster loomed, but the saint was not deterred. He ordered the hearth to be kindled, the main chamber to be cleared and tidied, and the ancient, ivory-ornamented table to be cleaned. While Niketas does not explicitly state as much, he implies that the saint foresaw the future; and lo and behold! the elders of the village began to bring him rams, lambs, chicken, doves and selected wine (the Genoa version adds "loaves"), and Theosebo cooked wonderful (lit. "clean", σπαστικά, only the Genoa manuscript has this vernacular word) dishes. The first "hurdle-suspense" was thus overcome. The banquet was perfect, but the audience waits in vain for the question of the mission to be raised. This is the second hurdle: the envoys might easily depart without meeting Maria who, in accordance with the patriarchal rules of the land, was not allowed to join the male company. But they saw Theosebo waiting on them, and were astonished by her beauty, since "there was nobody like her in the whole area of Pontos." Cautiously, they began their quest, asking whether Philaretos had daughters, to which his reply was yes; then they tried to find out whether he had granddaughters, and again the answer was yes. Masterfully Niketas keeps the audience alert, suspending the encounter with the granddaughters to the next morning.

In the morning the envoys eagerly (μετὰ σπουδῆς πολλῆς) urged Philaretos to let them see the girls. Well, answers the saint, again delaying the dénouement, we are poor but nonetheless know the proper behavior: our females are not permitted to leave their rooms;

*Geschichte nach dem ersten Ikonoklasmus*, Munich 1978, II, 626-630; W. TREADGOLD, The Bride-Shows of the Byzantine Emperors, *Byzantion* 49, 1979, 395-413; L. RYDÉN, The Bride-Shows at the Byzantine Court—History or Fiction?, *Eranos* 83, 1985, 175-191; L. M. HANS, Der Kaiser als Märchenprinz. Brautschau und Heiratspolitik in Konstantinopel (395-882), *JÖB* 38, 1988, 33-52. C. CUPANE, Il 'concorso di bellezza' in Beltrando e Crisanza sulla via fra Bisanzio e l'Occidente medievale, *JÖB* 33, 1983, 221-248, handles primarily the topic as reflected in late Byzantine literary texts; she finds Speck's critical treatment of Maria's bride-show fully convincing (p. 225 n. 17).

<sup>9</sup> I. DILLER-SELLSCHOPP, Der Weg des Aschenputtelmädchens vom Orient zu den Brüdern Grimm, *Folia neohellenica* 4, 1982, 19f. Cf. S. THOMPSON, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Bloomington-London 1955-1958, vol. 5, 8f.: L102.

you have to go to their κουβούκλιον. And this they promptly did (Niketas underlines “energetically” [σπουδαίως] —energy forms the leitmotif of this section as did speed in the first part) and saw the daughters and granddaughters of Philaretos, and all of them were so beautiful that the Constantinopolitans were unable to tell the daughters from their mothers. The envoys took the measurements of the females (height, the size of the foot), and probably their resemblance to a model-portrait (or just their waist?), found them adequate and, after the examination, joyfully returned to the capital accompanied by the entire family.

While it might seem that the moment for the climax of the story has arrived, this is not in fact the case. An “interlude” comes first —a catalogue of Philaretos’ children and his children’s children. Only thereafter does the beauty contest itself begin, during which the arrogant daughter of Gerontianos shows up expecting to gain the crown. But this is a false “hurdle” eventually Philaretos’ granddaughters (as the reader has expected) turn out to be the winners: Maria is chosen by the emperor, another sister married the *patrikios* Konstantinakios, and the third was sent to the king of the Lombards.

The “antithesis” is the earthly triumph of Philaretos and his family. They settled in Constantinople, wealthier and more influential than ever. We then enter the third section (“synthesis”), in which the saint ascends to the height of his exploits and demonstrates that royal connections have not impaired his generosity. Despite four years spent in the palace, he never put on a silk garment; the Genoa recension states this twice, whereas there is no repetition of the sentence in the Paris manuscript (Fourmy–Leroy, 151.8-9 and 17; Vasiliev, 80.14-15). The third section, naturally, is the most “hagiographical” of the three. We find here elements typical of the hagiographical discourse, such as the saint’s admonitions and prediction of his own death. With the exception of the scene at his deathbed the only “realistic” (and at the same time fairy-tale) episode is one illustrating his generosity. The saint, soon after his move to the capital, gathered his kin, announced to them that on the next day he would invite the emperor, the *patrikios* (Konstantinakios?) and the whole Senate to his home, and enjoined his family to prepare the “great lunch” (a parallel to the “great dinner” of the second section) by the time of his return from the palace. Instead of the high-ranking guests, however, Philaretos gathered a hundred poor men from the Constantinopolitan *emboloi* (the Paris version gives the figure of two hundred), and ordered his sons and grandsons to tend the poor. This episode is intended to remind the reader that Philaretos retained his old habit of alms-giving; first his relatives state this grudgingly, worried that he will ruin them again (Fourmy–Leroy, 145.27-29; Vasiliev, 78.19-20), then Niketas repeats it auctorially (Fourmy–Leroy, 149.11; Vasiliev, 79.16). This sole vivid episode of the third section is modeled on a classical *vita* written in the first half of the seventh century by Leontios of Cyprus. Like Philaretos, the saintly hero of this *Vita*, John, Patriarch of Alexandria, is surnamed “Merciful” (Ἐλεήμων) and his first concern, upon his election to the ecclesiastical throne of the megalopolis, is to care for the poor. Like Philaretos, John disguised his intention in a linguistic cloud and commanded the

ecclesiastical officials to make a list of all the lords in the city.<sup>10</sup> Niketas reproduces the same game, only instead of “lords” he has the members of the Senate.

The image of the hero is as original as the composition of the *vita*. Socially Philaretos is a villager from the *chora* of the Paphlagonians. The Genoa recension calls him the son of George φερώνυμος (Fourmy–Leroy, 113.6) which the editors translate *le Bien-Nommé*, i.e. well-named. The word φερώνυμος is common in hagiographical texts and is applied to indicate the literal meaning of the name; Niketas implies that the father of the saint was George in accordance with his “peasant” (in Greek γεωργός) status, “named after” being the primary meaning of φερώνυμος.<sup>11</sup> The text of the Paris version is more explicit: Philaretos here is introduced as an inhabitant of the village Amnia, the son of George the farmer (γητόνου), most prominent in his locale (Vasiliev, 64.15-16). Both versions call Philaretos “noble” (εὐγενής), the term designating, in hagiographical texts, first and foremost high moral standards. The long-running discussion of the saint’s status —was he or was he not a member of the aristocracy<sup>12</sup>— has little relevance for our discussion; whatever the case, the Philaretos of the *Vita* knew how to plough the soil and handle a cow. Niketas describes him as very rich in order to make the parallel with the biblical Job more conspicuous and to show how drastic was his material downfall due to his spiritual passion for charitable giving.

Was Philaretos (in the imagination of his grandson) a noble landowner or the son of a well-off peasant? The action of the first two sections takes place in a rural milieu. No provincial town is mentioned save Gangra, the administrative center of the district in which the village of Amnia is located. The beneficiaries of Philaretos’ generosity as well as those who came to his assistance (the poor, peasants, the *stratiotes* Mousoulis, the elders of Amnia, a local *archon*) all live in the countryside and are more or less involved in agriculture. Constantinople does not appear before the third section, and in this part Niketas speaks not about the city but about the palace and some monasteries with which his family was associated.<sup>13</sup> The rural milieu was not a common feature of earlier *vitae*

<sup>10</sup> A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE–L. RYDÉN, *Vie de Syméon le Fou et vie de Jean de Chypre*, Paris 1974 [Institut Français d’Archéologie de Beyrouth. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique XCV], 347.25.

<sup>11</sup> Philaretos’ father was not “named after St. George” as suggested by F. WINKELMANN, *Quellenstudien zur herrschenden Klasse von Byzanz im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1987 [BBA 54], 149.

<sup>12</sup> See J. W. NESBITT, *The Life of St. Philaretos (702-92) and its Significance for Byzantine Agriculture*, *GOTHr* 14, 1969, 152f.; M. KAPLAN, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VI<sup>e</sup> au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1992 [Byzantina Sorbonensia 10], 333, 483. For a different view, see A. KAZHDAN, *One more Agrarian History of Byzantium*, *BS* 55, 1994, 81.

<sup>13</sup> M.-F. AUZÉPY, *De Philarète, de sa famille et de certains monastères de Constantinople*, in C. JOLIVET LÉVY–M. KAPLAN–J.-P. SODINI (eds.), *Les saints et leur sanctuaire à Byzance*, Paris 1993 [Byzantina Sorbonensia 11], 121f.

(except for some Egyptian texts, but even in these the urban element is substantial<sup>14</sup>), and genuine country saints (Nicholas of Sion and Theodore of Sykeon) are described only in works of the early seventh century, appearing infrequently in the stories of the Dark Century. The story of Philaretos is a regular country tale (with a Constantinopolitan appendix), and opens the way for the "rural hagiography" of the ninth and tenth centuries.

The originality of the *Vita* reveals itself in the image of its protagonist more than in the shift of its social setting. As S. V. Poljakova has shown,<sup>15</sup> Philaretos has a parallel in the folklore figure of the "happy fool", a man acting contrary to common sense and common expectations, trespassing the social order and, in the final account, demonstrating his moral superiority. Philaretos gives away everything he possesses, and he does it with joy, μετὰ χαρᾶς, as Niketas underscores several times (Fourmy-Leroy, 127.20 and 24, 129.5-6). Niketas quotes John Chrysostom (*De eleemosyna*, PG 60, 707.34-35) saying that wealth is good for those who use it properly and poverty is good for those who can endure it; here Niketas adds (only in the Paris manuscript: Vasiliev, 66.8-10) "happily" (εὐχαρίστως) reinforcing the concept of the personal satisfaction inherent in generous charity.

As is so often the case in folklore tale, the deeds of Philaretos are interspersed with the play of "materialized misunderstanding". Thus the saint gives his pair of oxen to a peasant. Philaretos' wife and children bemoaned the loss, but the saint consoled them by promising to give them a hoard sufficient for a hundred years; they construed the hoard "physically", but what the saint meant was "the inexhaustible (ἀδαπάνητος — a non-classical word<sup>16</sup>) fortune of God" (p. 125.29). Niketas returns to the motif of the divine treasure in the third section. The play is repeated in the case of the donation of a calf to a peasant: Theosebo, his wife, accuses him with bitter irony of cruelty (the word she used, ἀνελεήμων, obviously refers to Philaretos' sobriquet *Eleemon*, "Merciful"), since he severed the calf from its mother. Philaretos takes her words literally (but perverts their actual message), and gives the cow away to the same peasant. Poor Theosebo berates herself: had she not mentioned Philaretos' "cruelty" she would not have deprived her own children of the cow.

The misunderstanding-play is particularly developed in the last donation story of the *Vita*, about a poor man who begged for a measure of grain. Philaretos starts by generously offering him a whole *modios* from the six *modioi* of grain he had just borrowed. Theosebo angrily suggests to her husband that he give away one more *modios*. Then a third *modios* is added together with a sack. But the play does not stop here. Interpreting literally the irony (the adverb εἰρωνικῶς is employed: Fourmy-Leroy, 131.24) of his wife, Philaretos

<sup>14</sup> E. WYPSZYCKA, Le monachisme égyptien et les villes, *TM* 12, 1994, 4-44.

<sup>15</sup> S. V. POLJAKOVA, Fol'klornyj sjužet o ščastlivom glupce v nekotoryh pamjatnikah agiografii VIII v., *Viz Vrem* 34, 1973, 130-136. This article has been passed over virtually unnoticed in European scholarship. On the theme of the fool in folklore, see THOMPSON, *Motif-Index*, vol. 6, 305 (Index).

<sup>16</sup> E. TRAPP, *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, 1, Vienna 1994, 17.

offers to the poor the rest of the grain and his donkey to transport the six *modioi*. "You are an angel, not a man," retorts the angry wife, "and you need no food at all."

The image of the fool in the name of Christ has a long history in Greek literature.<sup>17</sup> Niketas who seems to have been aware of Leontios of Cyprus' *Vita of John the Merciful* could have read his other *chef d'œuvre*, the *Vita of Symeon the Fool*.<sup>18</sup> There is, however, a substantial difference in the deportment of Symeon and Philaretos: Symeon is a "wild" holy man, overtly breaking the rules of social behavior of the *polis*, in public places, in the city streets and even in churches (G. Dagron stresses in general the "urban" character of the late Roman holy fool), whereas Philaretos' "foolishness" is noticeable only within the inner circle of his family — by his generosity he led his family to the brink of starvation, and while his wife and other relatives protest at his actions, the actions do not incite any public outrage. The family-oriented *Vita* removes the conflict of common sense and sanctity from the public arena of the *polis* and restricts it to the microcosm of the family.

All in all, Philaretos is not a typical saint. Apart from his generosity the only feature in his portrayal that is reminiscent of holiness is the parallelism with some biblical personages, such as Job, and especially Abraham. At the very beginning, Niketas says that his grandfather "truly" resembled Abraham and Jacob (Fourmy-Leroy, 115.12), and at the end of the story Niketas describes his vision in which a young man of brilliant appearance (obviously an angel) bluntly identified Philaretos as a "new Abraham" (p. 163.25-32). The same motif comes to the fore in the scene of the banquet arranged for the imperial envoys: Philaretos, affirms Niketas at this point, resembled Abraham not only in his generosity but in his appearance as well (p. 137.34-139.1). He means that Philaretos was physically attractive, since he immediately characterizes the saint's son John (Niketas' father) as "very handsome": he was tall like Saul, had Absalom's hair and the beauty of Joseph.

Philaretos was not a hermit. He had a large family and appreciated good cuisine. His abstinence is never mentioned, even though he was moderate in his demands and preferred simple dress to expensive attire. Nor is his submissiveness emphasized; just the opposite, he governed his family, and his wife, children and grandchildren were held at bay. He had no prophetic visions, did not work miracles, and Niketas makes no mention of long prayers, sleeping on the floor and other ascetic exercises. While there is no place for icons in his ambience, it is not necessarily owing to the alleged Iconoclastic character of the *Vita*

<sup>17</sup> Literature on the holy fools is enormous, beginning with the monograph by I. KOVALEVSKIJ, *Jurodivost' o Hriste i jurodivost' Hrista radi v vostočnoj i ruskoj cerkvi*, Moscow 1895. See also L. RYDÉN, The Holy Fool, in S. HACKEL (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint: Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, London 1981 [Studies supplementary to *Sobornost* 5], 106-113; A. SYRKIN, On the Behavior of the 'Fools for Christ's Sake', *History of Religions* 22, 1982, 150-171; G. DAGRON, L'homme sans honneur ou le saint scandaleux, *Annales ESC* 45, 1990, 929-939; Ch. ANGELIDE, Η παρουσία των σαλών στη βυζαντινή κοινωνία, *Οι περιθωριακοί στο Βυζάντιο*, Athens 1993, 85-102; S. IVANOV, *Vizantijskoe jurodstvo*, Moscow 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Ed. FESTUGIÈRE - RYDÉN, *Vie de Syméon*, 1-253.

but simply because Philaretos was a happy fool, a folklore personage, a symbol of a single virtue, that of generosity.

The customary plot of a saint's *vita* is the struggle of good and evil, the saint being an incarnation of good and his adversary (the emperor in the *Vita of Stephen the Younger*, the Arabs in the *Martyrdom of the Sabaites*, and so on) a manifestation of evil. There is no obviously evil figure in the *Vita of Philaretos*. At the beginning Niketas refers to the Devil who envied "the virtuous behavior" of the hero as in the past he had envied Job (p. 115.20-21), but we should not forget that the destiny of the biblical Job was tragic (he lost not only his fortune but his children, he fell sick and ended up on the dung-hill scraping off innumerable sores) whereas the story of our happy fool is a farce rather than a drama. The unpleasantly arrogant daughter of Gerontianos was powerless to vie with Maria: as soon as she emerged from non-existence (in the story) the empress sent her home: "You are good and beautiful, but a mismatch for the emperor" (p. 143.8-9). The conflict of the *Vita* is not that of good and evil but that of perfect (Philaretos) and good (his family) that finally comes to terms with the perfect: the relatives accept the righteousness of their patriarch.

The world of Theodore of Stoudios was that of hard struggle, of prisons and famine, of persecutors and victims, of confessors and scoundrels—a serious and tragic world. Niketas, his contemporary, an exiled monk, looked at the cosmos with a soft smile: even if there was no proper food at home, wild herbs were always available.

Just as the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* initiates a series of predominantly Constantinopolitan hagiographical discourses, so the *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful* stands at the head of the "rural hagiography" which flourished in the ninth and tenth centuries. Predominantly rural (sometimes with strong Constantinopolitan elements) are such ninth-century texts as the *vitae* of Ioannikios, Peter of Atroa, Theophanes the Confessor, Niketas Patrikios, Nikephoros of Medikion, David, Symeon and George of Lesbos, Agapetos of Synada (or Synaos), and Zenais [and Philonilla]. We shall return to some of these later on. We shall limit ourselves now to a single reference to the anonymous *Vita of Eustratios of Agauros*<sup>19</sup> which probably was directly influenced by the story of Philaretos. The author, praising the saint's generosity, describes his donation of a horse to a *stratiotes* in need (A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analekta* 4, 377.4-5) and of an animal for plowing to a peasant who had lost his ox (p. 377.9-12)—exploits similar to two major episodes of the first section of the *Vita of Philaretos*. Eustratios, however, had a more varied range of functions than Philaretos: he worked miracles so as to conquer the Devil who had stopped a train of oxen, he caused a captain to find a big fish, and the sick were cured by licking the dust off his feet and later at his tomb. This "hagiographical diversity" transforms the *Vita of Eustratios* into a string of disparate episodes deprived of the sequence and unity so remarkable in the composition of the *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful*.

<sup>19</sup> BHG 645; ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Analekta* 4, 367-400 and 5, 408-410.

The *Vita of Philaretos* was written by a monk, but the hero of his hagiographical discourse is a layman; we may characterize it as a secular biography. Another example of this sub-genre is the anonymous *Vita of Antony the Younger*, which was composed several decades later and thus belongs in the next period.

### B. Vita of Antony the Younger

Antony the Younger<sup>20</sup> (whose baptismal name was John) died in 865, and his biography was written soon after the saint's death. Following a preamble, it begins with a traditional statement concerning his place of birth and the names of his "noble" (whatever this means) parents. But immediately after these words comes a digression—a story of the robber John who strangely combined his bloodthirsty and immoral occupation with devotion to the Christian faith and regular pilgrimages. With picturesque detail, the hagiographer narrates how John defeated in a single combat and killed with his own fist a terrible Ethiopian. He entered the monastery of St. Sabas and effectively protected it from Arab raids: we are told how he bound up five attackers and put a sixth man under a heavy boulder so that he was unable to move.<sup>21</sup>

John-Antony's parents entrusted their son to the service (*διακονίη*) of this irregular holy man, and Antony's career went on to follow an irregular course, combining traditional hagiographical features with elements of secular biography. Compositionally, the story of Antony is prepared by John's prophecy, that forms a sort of prose *heirmos*: "You will go beyond the borders of Syria, settle in Romania and for a long time you will serve in the world, commanding people, administering cities, and gaining trophies over adversaries" (p. 192.25-27). Only thereafter was he destined to take on the monastic habit, thus leaving the account of the secular life of Antony to fill up the major (and the most substantial) part of his biography.

<sup>20</sup> BHG 142; ed. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Sylloge*, 186-216, additions in F. HALKIN, Saint Antoine le Jeune et Pétronas le vainqueur des Arabes en 863, *AB* 62, 1944, 187-225 and 64, 1946, 256f. See on the *vita*, H. LOPAREV, Vizantijskie žitija svjatyh VII-IX vekov, *VizVrem* 18, 1911, 109-124.

<sup>21</sup> On the theme of the robber in Christian literature of the Late Roman empire see R. DOSTÁLOVÁ, Der arabische Räuber Lykurgos in Nonnos' Dionysiaka, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 59-66. To her data one could add the tale of Palladios, *The Lausiac History*, ed. G. BUTLER, *The Lausiac History of Palladius II*, Cambridge 1904 [Texts and Studies VI.2 2], 59-60, about Moses the Ethiopian, a hermit in Sketis, former robber; among his exploits, there is a story how he bound up burglars who broke into his cell. On Moses see, I. SHAHID, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, Washington 1984, 152-157, 185-187.



Nothing is said about Antony's ascetic training under the protection of the holy robber. We learn only that on one occasion the boy fell sick and was cured by a marvelous vision: he saw a lady in purple (i.e. imperial) attire and two men clad in white who served her; the lady (evidently the Virgin Mary) poured some water on the head of the boy, so that he not only recovered, but never again had a headache in his whole life.

Next we find Antony in Attalia, a coastal city in the theme of Kibyrrheotai, where he had fled from Syria. The hagiographer uses this opportunity to give a psychosomatic portrait of his hero, and this portrait is far from an image of the emaciated human being we imagine a saint to be: "When he came to the land of the Romans, John (i.e. Antony) was a teenager, big and manly, much taller than is common for his age; he was clever, capable of finding a right and advantageous solution to practical problems" (p. 193.21-25). A Byzantine fleet visited Attalia, and its commander, a *patrikios*, spotted Antony who surpassed everyone else in height and manliness; he liked the youth at first sight. The hagiographer turns to a philosophical generalization: "The souls of perceptive men are able to foresee [people's] future by their external appearance" (p. 193.32-194.1). Anyhow, the *patrikios* (subsequently designated by the ancient term trierarch) enlisted Antony as one of his *oikeiakoi* and eventually introduced him to the Iconoclastic emperor Michael II (820-29) who appointed the young man vice-governor (*ek prosopou*) of the theme of Kibyrrheotai. Whether or not the hagiographer, while composing the career of his hero, was influenced by the biography of Basil I, the events described in the *Vita* have nothing in common with the hagiographical kanon.

More so even than Philaretos, Antony is a layman, a "valiant warrior and brilliant member of the council", as the hagiographer succinctly puts it (p. 194.31-32). He acts as legislator, he severely punishes some criminals to keep others at bay, he routs the hordes of the rebel Thomas [the Slav] and manages to save Attalia from an attack of the Arab navy. Having forgotten John's prophecy, he even considered marrying. But interwoven with these political and personal actions the hagiographical theme is taken up, with instances of Antony's ascetic behavior and the gift of wonder-working. The hagiographer inserts a beautiful novelette about the cure of a barren matron—a standard feat of holy men and women. In the *vita*, however, it acquires intriguing details that distinguish this novelette from routine healings. Antony pretended to be a renowned physician. A rich landowner, who was still childless after twenty five years of wedlock, entreated his help. The saint-healer bargained with his client: the man suggested a third of his fortune as reward. Antony demanded ten stallions instead. The means used by Antony for the miracle of healing is unique in Byzantine literature: he cut off several leaves of the Gospel book, made a girdle of the parchment, and told the woman to wear it. The woman conceived immediately. (Antony's magical and "naturalistic" actions differ radically from the pure spiritual healing of St. Anna who, according to divers homilies, overcame barrenness by the power of prayer and divine grace).

Putting on the monastic habit forms a substantial portion of the hagiographical discourse. In the *Vita of Antony* it takes on the color of an adventure: a high-ranking civil

official under an Iconoclastic emperor, Antony evidently needed to use cunning in order to be tonsured. But the subterfuge employed, as described by the hagiographer, is not only entertaining but unashamedly far-fetched. Antony invited all the functionaries and military commanders of his district and organized for them a sumptuous "Syracusan" (p. 202.19) feast. He ensured that the guests drank heavily, while he remained sober having taken a potion of boiled onion served in a crimson goblet (lest he reveal the deception). As the drunken guests fell asleep on the spot, Antony and his servant, in the dead of night, climbed the pillar of the priest Eustratios who tonsured them.

We should not ask why Antony needed to fill his fellow officers with drink in order to become a monk, nor why subsequently Michael II dispatches an entire fleet to execute the "deserter" by hanging and suffocation with smoke, nor why the commander of this fleet lands in the mainland city of Sylaiou instead of arriving by sea at Attalia. Whether historical truth or fiction, this series of events creates an artistic situation that is full of suspense, and it furnishes the hagiographer with an artistic reason to make Antony leave his relatives and colleagues in Attalia and begin an adventurous journey<sup>22</sup> which precedes his settling down on Mount Olympos—briefly in the Agauros monastery, then in that of the Eunuchs.

Here the hagiographer touches upon the controversy of the time, that of Iconoclasm, although in a somewhat strange manner. When Antony came to the monastery of Agauros (a bastion of St. Ioannikios) he was told that the leaders "of the false heresy of the *Eikonomachoi*" were positioned there in their search for the Orthodox (p. 204.7-8), and so he retired to the monastery of the Eunuchs. Antony was not a martyr, he did not look for an open confrontation with the Iconoclasts (who took up residence in the monastery of Ioannikios); indeed, when he was persecuted by the emperor Theophilos, it was due not to his veneration of icons but to his alleged cruelty toward the supporters of the rebel Thomas.

The rest of the *Vita* is purely hagiographical, including the miracle of the resurrection of a dead girl. Only in the fragment published by F. Halkin does the *patrikios* and brother of the empress Theodora Petronas make an appearance, a man who, to begin with, was an impious pleasure-monger but later left Constantinople and retired to the house of the holy healers Kosmas and Damianos. Antony cured him and predicted his victory over the Arabs, which must have happened in 863.

Antony is an unusual saint, and his biographer only in passing treats the typically monastic/ascetic features of his conduct. First and foremost, he acted as an official concerned with the political well-being of his city. He met the Iconoclastic rulers Michael II and Theophilos, but the author seems to avoid the controversy, unless we count his phrase concerning the Iconoclasts haunting the monastery of Agauros as a slanted comment on the issue. The hagiographer, who was attentive to the role of women (Antony,

<sup>22</sup> E. MALAMUT, *Sur la route des saints byzantins*, Paris 1993, 249-251.



he says [p. 199.1-4], put young women disguised as men on the walls of Attalia to frighten the Arabs, who were deceived into thinking there were more defenders of the city than was in fact the case) several times raises sexual questions: Antony had a lewd dream in which he saw a naked woman sitting in his cell (p. 207.24-32); he was tormented by sexual desire and came close to breaking the vow of chastity (p. 200.17-25); he even decided to enter wedlock, choosing a girl and inviting to a banquet the noble relatives of his fiancée (p. 200.27-31).

The *Vita of Antony the Younger* is remarkable in yet another way. The author portrays some minor characters (such as John the robber, or Petronas) who are morally complex or open to change. While the main figures are usually portrayed as good or bad, as heroes and anti-heroes, a kind of balanced characterization is applied to some of the minor figures.

We shall meet another "semi-secular" biography in the work of a highly controversial author, Ignatios the Deacon (see below, p. 360-365).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### COMIC DISCOURSE: VITAE OF LEO OF CATANIA AND PANKRATIOS OF TAORMINA, AND THE *PARASTASEIS SYNTOMOI CHRONIKAI*

*Homo Byzantinus ludens* has not yet attracted the attention he deserves, in part because the Byzantines tried hard to create the illusion that the pious never burst out laughing ("Christ never laughed," was a popular saying), permitting themselves but a slight smile as a sign of sympathy and probably of condescension. While Antiquity accepted laughter as a positive emotion and made it a proper characteristic of Homeric gods, the Church fathers (especially Jerome and Basil the Great) rejected laughter as incompatible with a Christian vocation. The Church fathers, however, admitted that laughter could be an expression of spiritual joy and of derision of the pagan world, heresy and mundane relations.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter we shall examine three texts which seem to have little in common. The feature, however, that allows us to classify the three texts as belonging to a single type is their fine balance between the serious and comic, between piety and parody, reminding one to some extent of goliardic poetry with its combination of coarse jest and sincere religious devotion.

The modern reader has difficulty grasping the nature of medieval laughter. In playing with the sacrosanct, authors of comic discourses seem to have walked a tightrope; yet they were "good Christians" and their goal was salvation, both their own and that of their audience. In comic discourse Good conquers Evil as it does in regular, "serious" literature. But human nature is irrepressibly playful. The authors of the tenth century articulated the

<sup>1</sup> N. ADKIN, *The Fathers on Laughter*, *Orpheus* 6, 1985, 149-152; G. LUCK, *Humor*, *RAC* 16, 1994, 767-770. Cf. also G. SOYTER, *Humor and Satire in der byzantinischen Literatur*, Sonderabdruck aus den *Bayerischen Blättern für das Gymnasialschulwesen*, Munich 1928, 147-162 and 224-239, especially 147-148.

belief that laughter is as natural for man as neighing is for a horse, and some earlier writers, even hagiographers (subliminally? unconsciously?), began to take hesitant steps toward representing the serious and pious through images and renderings which are comic and parodical. Here we shall understand the "comic" as an impropriety of situation and wording—not the illusory impropriety of a fool for Christ's sake, flouting everyday wisdom in the name of sublime truth, but the impropriety of a deception, parody or game. We need to bear in mind, however, that medieval parody had a different function to modern satire: it was an artistic means to emphasize serious phenomena. The "improper" or comic element can form the core of a discourse, or be a peripheral issue, or emerge in multiple instances. The mechanism of the comic is here a break in logic, setting up the unreasonable and outlandish as a reality side by side with the "facts" accepted by a normal reader as real, an interweaving of fiction into a fabric of factuality.

The examination of these three texts is fraught with difficulties not only because the concept of Byzantine laughter seems to be strange and elusive, contradicting the idea of Byzantine solemnity, but also owing to more "technical" factors: we do not know who authored them, or when they were produced, and it is difficult to establish where two of them were written.

#### A. Leo of Catania and the magician Heliodore (BHG 981-981e)

The life of Leo of Catania (in Sicily) is described in a "doublet" of two *Vitae*, one of which, published by A. Acconcia Longo, is shorter, while the other, published by V. Latyšev, presents an elaborate, extended version.<sup>2</sup> We can only guess as to which of them is closer to the original.

We do not know when Leo of Catania lived. The author of the extended *Vita* sees him as a contemporary of the emperor Constantine IV (668-85) and his son Justinian II. On the other hand, the shorter version introduces instead the emperors Leo and Constantine, who can be Leo III (717-41) and Constantine V, Leo IV (775-80) and Constantine VI, or even Leo V (813-20) whose son Symbarios was crowned as Constantine. Added to this confusion is the fact that no bishop of Catania named Leo is known from other sources.

The *Vita* is anonymous and the date of the compilation of its original unknown. It is considered a work of the period of Iconoclasm. M.-F. Auzépy dated the legend (in the form

<sup>2</sup> V. LATYŠEV, *Neizdannye grečeskie agiografičeskie teksty*, St. Petersburg 1914, 12-28 and 150f.; A. ACCONCIA LONGO, La vita di s. Leone vescovo di Catania e gli incantesimi del mago Eliodoro, *RSBN* 26, 1989, 3-98. A *vita* in verse known from a manuscript of 1307 was created much later: D. RAFFIN, La vita metrica anonima su Leone di Catania, *BullBadGr* 16, 1962, 37-48. A medieval Latin version exists as well: Caetanus, *Vitae sanctorum Siculorum* 2, Palermo 1667, 9-22.

of the shorter version) to somewhere between 730 and 843.<sup>3</sup> Acconcia Longo limited the "probable date" of compilation of the *Vita* to the reign of Leo V or even Michael II (820-29);<sup>4</sup> she supposed that already in the middle of the ninth century Agnellus of Ravenna had imitated the *Vita of Leo*. This dating, however, is based on circumstantial evidence, and, despite some parallels with Agnellus, we cannot rule out the second half of the ninth century as a possible date for the production of the *Vitae*.

No less complicated is the question of the place where the legend originated. It is natural to think that the work was produced in Sicily: the author is aware of the local topography. Acconcia Longo even suggests that the site called Achilleion (where Heliodoros was executed) corresponds to the Terme Achilliane/Achelliane, located now near the modern cathedral and via Garibaldi in Catania. On the other hand, many of Heliodoros' "miracles" take place in Constantinople, and the author is evidently interested in the court of the capital.

The legend—whenever it was created—is a remarkable original text, in which the anti-hero, the magician and sorcerer Heliodoros, overshadows the figure of the saint Leo. Acconcia Longo advanced the idea that the portrait of Heliodoros is based on a real character, Heliodoros of Emesa, the author of the romance *Ethiopica*. We know very little about the real Heliodoros. Tradition ascribes to him an interest in alchemy; he is also said to have become, during the reign of Theodosios I (379-95), bishop of Tricca in Thessaly. It is doubtful whether the coincidence of names and an obscure mention of alchemic interests of the writer from Emesa suffice to identify these two persons. What little we know about the bishop of Tricca contradicts the story of our Heliodoros: he lived long before the emperors Constantine IV and Justinian II (let alone Leo and Constantine, whoever they were); he acted far from Sicily; he was involved in alchemy, not sorcery, and finished his life in episcopal robes.

More productive is another observation made by the Italian scholar, namely that the so-called *Patria of Constantinople* (a historical and topographical survey) ascribes the building of the bronze Anemodoulion, a weather-vane of sorts, to a "godless Heliodoros", who lived in the reign of Leo "born in Syria", i.e. Leo III. The "godless Heliodoros" is of course not the bishop of Tricca, but he reminds one of our magician, although the only reason for identification is the similarity of names, since we know nothing about any meteorological or architectural pursuits of the anti-hero in the *Vita of Leo*.

Whether Heliodoros of the *Vita* had a historical prototype or not, he evidently had literary prototypes, even though they bear other names. L. Radermacher collected three

<sup>3</sup> M.-F. AUZÉPY, L'analyse littéraire et l'historien: l'exemple des vies de saints iconoclastes, *BS* 53, 1992, 62-67.

<sup>4</sup> Besides her publication quoted in n. 2, see her polemics against Auzépy: A. ACCONCIA LONGO, A proposito di un articolo sull'agiografia iconoclasta, *RSBN* 29, 1992-93, 10-17. The continuation of the discussion: M.-F. AUZÉPY, À propos des vies de saints iconoclastes, *RSBN* 30, 1993, 3-5 and A. ACCONCIA LONGO, Di nuovo sull'agiografia iconoclasta, *ibid.*, 7-15.

legends about hagiographical personages whom he rightly considered progenitors of the Faust legend: the story of Cyprianus and Justina, the tale told to Helladios about a servant boy of Proterios, and the *Vita of Theophilus*, *oikonomos* of the church in Adana.<sup>5</sup> Heliodoros, who also sold his soul to the Devil, belongs to this milieu of "Byzantine Faustus". The tales about Cyprianus and Helladios differ from the legend of Heliodoros primarily with regard to their "romantic element": women play a key role in the development of their plots, whereas the "feminine principle" is neglected in the *Vita of Leo*. The story of Theophilus reveals greater similarities with that of Heliodoros: in the *Vita of Leo*, as in the story of Theophilus, a Jew functions as a mediator between the sinner and the Devil, the contract is struck at night, and with typically Byzantine bureaucratic caution a written document confirms the agreement. The *Vita of Leo*, however, differs substantially from all the Faust-like tales collected by Radermacher: in these tales, the sinner, although he signs the accord with the Devil, in the final account atones and obtains forgiveness — unlike them Heliodoros is an unrepentant sinner, thrust by bishop Leo into the flames, the prefiguration of the eternal fire to which he will be consigned.

The motif of fire occupies a focal place in the *Vita*. Its climax is the burning of Heliodoros by Leo of Catania whose pious power surpassed the evil force of Heliodoros' magic. Strangely enough, the scene of the burning in the text closely reminds us of the description of Basil the Bogomil's execution in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*. We would not go so far as to claim that Anna imitated the *Vita*, but it is worth stressing that lexical similarity can appear in two otherwise independent works thanks to the existence of certain stereotypes in the minds of medieval authors.

The burning scene is prepared for structurally in the earlier part of the Leo's Life. Having completed the episode of Heliodoros' accord with the Devil, the author, in a flash of foresight, predicts the destiny of the anti-hero: Heliodoros, he says, "in shame and pain lost this [life] having become fuel for the eternal fire." He uses the same lexical pattern here as in the final scene of execution, although in a different sequence.

The motif of fire is not restricted in the *Vita* to the final scene and its prediction in the incipient "heirmos". When the *stratorissa* Aithalia spat in Heliodoros' face and called him a scoundrel, the sorcerer extinguished all the fires in the capital. Here fire is not a means of purification or of divine punishment — it is a demonic tool in Heliodoros' hands. The devilish nature of fire is revealed even more clearly in another episode.

The discourse begins with what seems to be merely a setting for the story — the description of Catania and its region, where Etna proudly raises its summit and regularly gushes out the fire of destruction. Later in the text the authorities of Catania are said to have dispatched a report complaining that Heliodoros threatened to destroy their town, to bury it under the flames of Etna. Again, we meet in this episode the theme of two fires: the natural fire of Etna, that a sorcerer is able to manipulate, fire interwoven with ancient myth

<sup>5</sup> L. RADERMACHER, *Griechische Quellen zur Faustsage*, Vienna-Leipzig 1927.

("the craters of Hephaistos" are mentioned) which attracted the pagan pseudo-philosopher Empedocles, and, on the other hand, the "eternal inferno" of the Christian Hell, the punishment of sinners. They are contrasted and united at the same time, for at the very beginning the writer proclaims that Providence arranged the fire of Etna for the purpose of refuting those who dare to disbelieve the existence of Gehenna. It is a traditional method of hagiographers to describe the birthplace of the hero, but the author of the *Vita* goes well beyond the requirements of tradition by inserting topographical curiosity into the main fabric of his story.

The composition of the *Vita* is carefully structured around the opposition of the hero and anti-hero. The text (after the preamble) consists of three parts: the first and the last are devoted to Leo, the middle (and major) section deals with his antipode, the magician Heliodoros. The image of Leo is a hagiographical stereotype, including a banal pun on his name and trivial epithets, such as "God-bearing shepherd", "the citizen of the heavenly city", "the imitator of apostles" and "God's servant", which frequently travel from one hagiographical text to another. The end of the *Vita* consists of similar stereotypes: Leo's fame reaches the bounds of the universe, the angels are enraptured by Leo's piety, miraculous healings are presented in an utterly abstract manner, with the exception of the healing of a woman from Syracuse, but even her story (hemorrhage, her fortune squandered on physicians) remains firmly within the limits of hagiographical formula.

The middle section of the *Vita* describing Heliodoros' actions is of a different style. Certainly, it is not stereotype-free (Heliodoros is named a new Jannes or Jambres<sup>6</sup> or Simon the Magus), but side by side with this the actions of the anti-hero are individually outlined. He compelled women to lift up their tunics to the thighs and strut in the streets under a hail of lewd jokes; he transformed stones into gold and wood into silver, having created complete turmoil in the market (a sleight of hand similar to that used in Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*); he inflamed the sexual desires of the daughters of noble citizens so that the poor girls jumped out of windows and embraced the first men they came across; in a flash he transported the functionary Herakleides and his companions from a bathhouse in Catania to the imperial bath in Constantinople; he vanished having immersed himself in a cup of water; he drew a boat across sand and sailed on it from Catania to the capital; he created a beautiful white charger, on which the nephew of Leo himself won horse races; and, again, Heliodoros made a stone resemble gold, using it to ransom himself from soldiers who had arrested him.

The Byzantines of the ninth century were interested in magic and sorcery. George the Monk devoted almost the whole section on the emperor Domitian to Apollonios of Tyana,

<sup>6</sup> The association with the biblical Jannes is common in Byzantine hagiography: see S. GERO, Jannes and Jambres in the *Vita Stephani iunioris*, *AB* 113, 1995, 281-292. Later, the name of Jannes was applied to the Iconoclastic patriarch John VII the Grammarian (e.g., PG 99, 277c) who, like Heliodoros, was perceived as a mighty magician. Of course, it is impossible to prove that the image of Heliodoros was influenced by legends about John the Grammarian.

a notorious magician (ed. De Boor 2, 444-446). This episode is borrowed from Malalas (p. 263-266), but George introduced some changes, ascribing to Apollonios the eviction of "snakes and scorpions (a striking parallel to *Luke* 10.19) from Byzantium" and the taming of unruly horses in the presence of archons. George quotes Anastasios of Sinai (*Quaestio* 20: PG 89, 525B), and finishes with a theoretical conclusion: God allows demons to show their "energy" in order to test our faith.

Where does a miracle end and sorcery begin? The Byzantines were aware of this question, observing the superficial similarity of magic and wonder-working, and often sought to determine the borderline between the creative function of the miracle and the destructiveness of magic.<sup>7</sup> Heliodoros' sorcery, however one looks at it, was not creative. It consisted of a series of deceptions; it caused, as the inhabitants of Catania complained, confusion of minds; it presaged famine and even the combustion of the town in the flames of Etna. Heliodoros' sorcery is linked to an urban milieu: he acts in the bathhouse, a typical haunt of demonic powers and at the same time the symbol of urban civilization; he intervenes in horse races, at the Hippodrome, the institution *par excellence* of the ancient city. Heliodoros' sorcery encompasses ship building and sailing, and his conflict with the poor Aithalia takes place within the city walls. Hagiography after the seventh century lost its links with the life of the provincial city, denouncing it as the center of ancient civilization, and made the saint either a Constantinopolitan politician or the protector of the country population and its cattle and crops (see below, p. 333ff.). Heliodoros' sorcery, on the other hand, is an urban phenomenon; the magician is a child of the town, shunning the healthy environment of the countryside.

Compared with the stereotyped hagiographical view of things, Heliodoros' sorcery is not only concrete; it also smacks of parody. The author daringly plays with revered concepts and images, imparting to them a perverse significance. Like the story of Justinian II in the *Chronography* of Theophanes (see above, p. 228f.), Heliodoros' evil activity is characterized by means of hagiographical vocabulary. As he arrived in Constantinople, narrates the writer, "all the people" poured out to meet him. The phrase (and the scene) originates in the hagiographical tradition: it is the saint to whom all the people flock as he appears in a new location, or as his corpse is laid in state, or as his relics are translated to a proper site of pilgrimage. The dwellers of Catania were ready to tear Heliodoros to pieces, but Herakleides, defending the magician, "mildly" stopped them. "Mildness" is a typical quality of the Byzantine saint, who never laughs but constantly smiles mildly or quietly rebuts unjust accusations. The Devil, relates the story-teller, was riding an enormous stag, an image bordering on blasphemy, since the stag was the symbol of Christ Himself, and, for instance, in the *Martyrion of Eustathios Plakidas* an enormous stag appeared to the future saint — the cross brightly shone between its antlers, and a heavenly

<sup>7</sup> See A. KAZHDAN, Holy and Unholy Miracle Workers, in H. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, Washington 1995, 73-82.

voice called Eustathios to convert to Christianity.<sup>8</sup> While waiting for his encounter with the Devil, Heliodoros had to climb "a high pillar", an image reminiscent of the figure of a holy stylite, dwelling among the pure elements, far from the sinful earth, although the hagiographer employs in this passage not the usual term for pillar, *στῦλος*, but the word *στήλη*, meaning first of all monument or statue (in pronunciation, however, the difference in spelling is not apparent). Thus, Heliodoros struck up his contract with the Devil, standing on a pillar/monument, high above the earth. Once, narrates the hagiographer, Heliodoros entered the shrine of God, where he began to leap like a mule and kick the people, inciting both laughter and indignation. The episode, certainly, may be interpreted simply as manifesting Heliodoros' impiety, his disregard for the sanctity of the Christian place of worship. But at the same time it is a parody of a scene in the famous *Vita of Symeon the Fool* by Leontios of Neapolis. In the latter, Leontios narrates how Symeon, upon arriving in Emesa, entered a church during the liturgy and started throwing nuts and putting out lamps.<sup>9</sup> Where, we may ask, lies the boundary between the piety of the Fool for Christ's sake and the impiety of a sorcerer? Heliodoros often moves rapidly, and in this rapidity he resembles the ethereal beings, the demons. But overcoming the limitation of time is a typical quality of saintly people and especially of holy objects: an icon thrown into the sea in Constantinople momentarily arrives in Rome,<sup>10</sup> and the imperial edict travels in no time from Constantinople to Myra of Lycia at the command of St. Nicholas.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the *Vita of Leo of Catania* contrasts the saint and the magician not only in the substance of their characters but in the structure of the images used. The activity of the anti-hero is formed of patches of hagiographical tradition, turned upside down and given opposite meanings. Moreover, the hero and anti-hero exist in different artistic worlds: Leo in a world of abstractions, stereotypes and traditional epithets, and Heliodoros in the sphere of more or less concrete situations, individual images and bizarre parodies. The only vivid miracle worked by Leo occurs when he enters with Heliodoros into the flame in which the sorcerer was burned to cinders, whereas the saint stepped out of the fire unharmed. This, the only vivid and concrete performance of Leo, signals the physical and artistic end of Heliodoros. For a long time his actions in Catania were condoned or disregarded by Leo; he even seduced Leo's nephew by giving him a magic stallion. Eventually the saint's forbearance was exhausted, the hero and anti-hero met in single combat, and Heliodoros, despite all his power — an adulterated power, borrowed, bought

<sup>8</sup> Metaphrastic revision: BHG 642, ed. G. VAN HOOFF, *Acta graeca s. Eustathii martyris et sociorum ejus*, AB 3, 1884, 69.9-15.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. L. RYDÉN, in A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, *Léontios de Néapolis, Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre*, Paris 1974 [Institut français d'archéologie de Beyrouth. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 95], 79.25-27.

<sup>10</sup> P. LAMZA, *Patriarch Germanos I. von Konstantinopel (715-730)*, Würzburg 1975 [Das östliche Christentum, N.F. 27], 233f.

<sup>11</sup> G. ANRICH, *Hagios Nikolaos I*, Leipzig 1913, 106-108.

from the Devil—perished in the flame, was turned to ashes and disappeared from the tale. The end of the *Vita*, as we have already said, belongs through and through to Leo of Catania; it consists of abstract formulas and, hagiographically speaking, is wholly conventional.

### B. The *Vita* of Pankratios of Taormina (BHG 1410-1412)

Pankratios, an Antiochean by birth, was allegedly a pupil of the apostle Peter, who ordained him bishop of Taormina in Sicily. He evangelized the country, won the support of the local ruler Bonifatius, worked miracles and helped Bonifatius in the war against his rival Aquilinus. Artagaros (Artagalos, in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*), an ally of pagan priests, murdered Pankratios.

A lengthy *Vita* is devoted to Pankratios.<sup>12</sup> Its author calls himself Evagrius, a “slave and assistant” of the saint, and an eyewitness and participant of the evangelization of Sicily. This text, however, contains many anachronisms (e.g., it mentions the Avars and Slavs) and wholly fantastic statements (Aquilinus is dubbed “basileus of Calabria” [Stallman, 369.4-5]) and cannot be contemporary. C. J. Stallman, the editor of the *Vita*, thinks that pseudo-Evagrius wrote before 730, and L. Cracco Ruggini places it in the eighth century.<sup>13</sup>

By the beginning of the ninth century, the legend of Pankratios was well known. Theodore of Stoudios mentioned the veneration of Pankratios in a “large church” in Sicily (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, ep. 386.64-65). He also cited “the story of St. Pankratios’ martyrdom” as proof that the apostle Peter ordered an icon of the Lord to be made (ep. 221.101; 532.22-23). This episode was evidently of first-rate importance for the polemicists against the Iconoclasts, and the patriarch Nikephoros also used it, in his unpublished *Refutation* cited by Stallman. Further, it is mentioned in the counterfeit epistle (ca. 815) of the patriarch of Jerusalem Thomas to the emperor Leo V and the Iconoclastic patriarch Theodotos, cited in the *Vita of Michael Synkellos*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A modern edition is available only in the thesis of C. J. STALLMAN, *The Life of S. Pancratius of Taormina* (2 vols.), submitted in 1986. On the hagiographical tradition of Pankratios see M. VAN ESBROECK–U. ZANETTI, Le dossier hagiographique de s. Pancrace de Taormina, *Storia della Sicilia e tradizione hagiografica nella tarda antichità*, Soveria Mannelli 1988, 155-171.

<sup>13</sup> L. CRACCO RUGGINI, Roma alla confluenza di due tradizioni agiografiche: Pancrazio martire ‘urbano’ e Pancrazio vescovo-martire de Taormina, *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 28, 1992, 36. She emphasizes (p. 42-52) the existence of the cult of Pankratios long before the eighth century.

<sup>14</sup> M. B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, Belfast 1990 [Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 1], 66.1-3.

More debatable are the cases attributed by Stallman to the eighth century: the *Florilegium* of Paris. gr. 1115 is a questionable text,<sup>15</sup> and the passage in the *Admonition of the Old Man* is not a quotation from the *Vita* of Pankratios.

A certain Gregory, a monk of the Pagourios monastery in Constantinople, compiled an *Enkomion* of Pankratios, devoid of any factual information.<sup>16</sup> Stallman, referring to a passage in this *Enkomion* listing the plights threatening Sicily (invasion, civil wars, heresies and a “new Goliath”) dated the text to the 820s, but the passage is too universal to serve as a basis for a persuasive conclusion. A *Kanon* for Pankratios written by a certain Elias and known from manuscripts of the eleventh century onward<sup>17</sup> is evidently based on the *Vita*, for it describes Pankratios’ victory over Aquilinus with the help of the cross and icon (vers. 160-166). Since Elias entreats Pankratios to rescue his *polis* “from the sword and invasion of the Arabs” (vers. 309-313), the *kanon* must have been produced not later than the ninth century.

The legend of Pankratios existed at the end of the eighth century; whether it existed in the form we know it now is another question. At any rate, the compiler of the *Synaxarium of Constantinople* (col. 807-809) used a different version of events: his Pankratios lived in Pontos in a cave and not on a pillar or a tower, as recorded in the *Vita* (Stallman, 4.1), and nor do we find in the *Vita* the testimony that Pankratios was murdered by the Montanists whose *archegos* was “Artagalos”, according to the *Synaxarium*. M. Van Esbroeck suggests the existence of a lost “vie primitive” of Pankratios that is reflected, to some extent, in the *Synaxarium*.<sup>18</sup>

While the events of the *Vita* take place in Sicily and southern Italy and the author lists various local place-names (not only well-known ones, such as Syracuse or Rhegion, but less familiar locations such as Salina), the possibility of its origin outside Taormina cannot easily be dismissed. First of all, pseudo-Evagrius is familiar with the Avars who worshipped quadrupeds, fire, water and their own swords (Stallman, 272.1-2), and also with the Slavs who lived in tents (p. 355.7-10). Neither of these peoples presented a threat to Sicily, which was attacked in the eighth century by the Arabs, not Avars and Slavs.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, the political structure of Taormina with her *hypatikos* clad in purple (p. 152.14-15), Senate and senators (p. 286.4, 432.14, etc.), *sekreton* (p. 135.2), praetorium (p. 140.10, 151.6, etc.), toparchs of adjacent districts (p. 297.15, 322.2-4) is modeled on Constantinople rather than

<sup>15</sup> J. A. MUNITIZ, Le Parisinus graecus 1115: description et arrière-plan historique, *Scriptorium* 36, 1982, 51-67 and especially A. ALEXAKIS, *Codex Parisinus graecus 1115 and its Archetype*, Washington 1996 [Dumbarton Oaks Studies 34].

<sup>16</sup> C. J. STALLMAN-PACITTI, The Encomium of S. Pancratius of Taormina by Gregory the Pagurite, *Byzantion* 60, 1990, 334-365.

<sup>17</sup> Ed. A. ACCONCIA LONGO in AHG 11, 1978, kan. XV, p. 155-170.

<sup>18</sup> M. VAN ESBROECK, Le contexte politique de la Vie de Pancrace de Tauromenium, *Sicilia e Italia suburbicaria tra IV e VIII secolo*, Soveria Mannelli 1991, 185-196.

<sup>19</sup> Conversely M. CAPALDO, Un insediamento slavo presso Siracusa nel primo millennio d. C., *Europa Orientalis* 2, 1983, 8, sees in σκηνώματα τῶν Σλάβων the “local reality” of Sicily.

a provincial town. Moreover, the members of the Senate assemble in the Forum of Tauros (p. 278.8); the Palace is positioned west of the Hippodrome (p. 349.11-12); the church is called "the House of Irene" (p. 357.14, 408.5) —too many coincidences with the capital to be incidental. The legend circulated in Constantinople, and Gregory of Pagourios surely reworked it in Constantinople.

In other words, the topographical situation resembles that of the *Vita of Leo of Catania*: both authors knew Italian territory, but they knew Constantinople as well. Both *Vitae* could have been written in or near Sicily, but they could as well have been created in the milieu of Italian émigrés in the capital. Scholars often view the *Vita of Pankratios* (but not that of Leo) as a political document. E. Patlagean, for example, sees it as belonging to the group of *Vitae* whose tendency was to stress the links of Sicily with Rome (Pankratios being a disciple of the apostle Peter), not Constantinople. On the other hand, A. Acconcia Longo, views the *Vita* as reflecting the rivalry between Syracuse and Taormina.<sup>20</sup> These are, however, no more than hypotheses which are difficult to prove. We can only suggest, comparing the two *Vitae*, that in the legend of Leo and Heliodoros connections between Sicily and Constantinople are strong, whereas in the *Vita of Pankratios* they can only be inferred from circumstantial evidence (this could be an indication of the later origin of the *Vita of Pankratios* in comparison with that of Leo). It needs to be borne in mind, however, that Pankratios is supposed to have lived in the first century, long before the foundation of Constantinople.

Another point of distinction is the attitude toward icons. The *Vita of Leo* ignores the issue, unless we interpret in an Iconoclastic sense a curious episode told by Leo's panegyrist: the saint fought not only heresy but paganism as well; he silenced the mob of "Hellenes" and replaced idols with the victorious cross. It is natural that Pankratios, in the first century, baptized pagans and demolished idols, but Leo, in the seventh or eighth centuries, could hardly encounter real heathens worshipping idols. The passage could be an Iconoclastic invective, but equally it could be a clumsy anachronism. At any rate, there are no icons in the *Vita of Leo*.

Pseudo-Evagrios is different. Not only does he preserve the legend of the apostle Peter, who commanded the painter Joseph to design an icon of Christ (Stallman, 11.13-12.3), but he even speaks frequently about wooden panels, pictures on parchment, icons and so on. "When I was looking," he states, "at the countenance [of Pankratios] on his icon, I thought that I saw him in flesh" (p. 442.12-14). Cross and icon function in conjunction in this *Vita*: they destroy idols (p. 350.4-7) and help to defeat the hostile army (p. 401.4-7). If the *Vita of Leo* is Iconoclastic or neutral, the *Vita of Pankratios* seems to be an important document of Iconodulic propaganda.

<sup>20</sup> E. PATLAGEAN, Les moines grecs d'Italie et l'apologie des thèses pontificales (VIIIe-IXe siècles), *Studi medievali* 5, 1964, repr. in EAD., *Structure sociale, famille, chrétienté à Byzance*, London 1981, pt. XIII, 596; A. ACCONCIA LONGO, Siracusa e Taormina nell'agiografia italogreca, *RSBN* 27, 1990, 33-54. Cf. CRACCO RUGGINI, Roma alla confluenza di due tradizioni, 35-52.

Possibly, the anonymous biographer of Leo and pseudo-Evagrios belonged to different political and religious camps. Their works, however, show significant artistic similarity, even though the external dissimilarity disguises their generic kinship.

Like the *Vita of Leo* the story of Pankratios has two layers. One is a traditional hagiographical discourse comprising such motifs as conversion of the saint's father, the saint's journey from Antioch to Sicily, his preaching of the new religion, resistance of the pagans and the hero's martyrdom. Pankratios has a double, Markianos of Syracuse, who dwelt in a hostile environment, in the land of the Troglodytes, near the Jews (Stallman, 334.9-11), and like Pankratios converted his neighbors to Christianity. The other layer is utterly non-hagiographical.<sup>21</sup>

This part of the story is an etymological myth serving to explain the origin of the city's name Tauromenium-Taormina. The myth, however, extends far beyond this "scholarly" purpose and forms a "romance" whose protagonists are Menia, of Macedonian origin, a "beautiful and wise" woman, and Tauros of Chanaan, a descendant of Nebrod (Nimrod), the king of Babylon (according to *Gen.* 10.8). Nimrod occupies an important place in biblical historical paraphrases of the eighth and ninth centuries, including pseudo-Methodios, George the Synkellos and George the Monk. His transformation into an ancestor of the mythical Tauros probably comes from an enigmatic line in *Micah* 5.5, "They will shepherd Assur in the sword and the land of Nimrod in its moat" (τάφρος pronounced "tafros", easily echoes ταῦρος, "tavros"). In his youth, Tauros was captured by Syrian elite troops (μυρόζωνοι, a biblical word: *Job* 29.25) and spent about fifteen years in captivity; a Roman captain bought Tauros and his mother for 30 golden pieces. On the way to Italy, the wind compelled the boat to stop in Rhegium, where the toparch Rhemaldus paid 60 gold pieces for both captives, while also providing them with wine and victuals. He took the mother and son to his mansion in Salina. Here Menia, Rhemaldus' wife, met them, poisoned the woman, and having coddled Tauros made him forget his mother. Gradually Tauros grew into a perfect warrior: he was skilled with the bow and threw stones like a giant (p. 380.11-12). The comparison with giants is not fortuitous—he was a descendant of the giant Nimrod—and neither is his first exploit—taming a huge and wild bull, a beast homophonic (ταῦρος) with the hero himself. Later the writer describes Tauros with words fitting a lyrical poem rather than a hagiographical text: "His arm was as strong as a lion and his leg was as light as the swift gazelle" (p. 394.6). Although a vigorous young man, Tauros led a chaste life.

<sup>21</sup> A. N. VESELOVSKII, Epizod o Tavre i Menii v apokrificheskom zhitii sv. Pankrata, *Sbornik Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk* 40, fasc. 2, 1886, 73-110, scrutinized this part of the *Vita* more than a century ago. Cf. F. ANGIÒ, La vita di Tauro dell'anonima Vita di San Pancrazio di Taormina, *Sileno* 20, 1994, 117-143. On the likelihood of pseudo-Evagrios' lexical borrowings from Hellenistic texts see F. ANGIÒ, Simplegadi e Stratto di Messina in Apollonio Rodio e nella Vita di Tauro, *Rudiae: Ricerche sul mondo classico* 5, 1993, 36-40.



Aquilinus "the Elder" was Rhemaldus' mighty neighbor; not satisfied with collecting tribute from Rhemaldus, Aquilinus decided to wage war and annex Rhemaldus' territory, plunder his wealth and subjugate his men. In the battle Rhemaldus fell; when Tauros saw him dead he took a ring from his finger and fled to Menia. She mourned her husband, but gave Tauros a kiss and sent him, with 6,000 men, against 80,000 soldiers of Aquilinus. Despite this gross inequality of forces, Tauros won the day, and the defeated Aquilinus escaped to Melodopolis (location unknown). The hero's reward was marriage with Menia, the only woman he had ever loved, as the hagiographer points out (p. 387.1-3).

The war dragged on. Aquilinus summoned a new army, 600,000 strong, from all the towns of Calabria. He surrounded the city built by Tauros, whose men were afraid of Aquilinus and schemed to kill Tauros and surrender Menia to the enemy, so that there would be "a single kingdom of Calabria and Sicily" (Stallman, 391.2-5). But the plan did not work: Tauros killed Aquilinus in single combat having hurled a stone 24 pounds in weight and dispersed his enormous army. Upon the victory he put on the *chlamys* of hegemony and the attire of consul (ὕπατιόν) and became the single ruler (μονοκράτωρ) in imitation of his ancestor Nimrod. He founded several towns: his capital Tauromenia, Calabrian Little Taurianae and another Taurianae in Salina.

All this is presented in flashback—events which took place before Pankratios' arrival in Sicily. Unlike the two layers in the *Vita of Leo* woven together through the competition of Leo and Heliodoros, the romance of Tauros and Menia has no direct links to the exploits of the saint. The connection is here artificial, based on the similarity of names: the new Aquilinus desired revenge for the elder Aquilinus, he gathered 600,000 soldiers and attacked Taormina, where pious Bonifatius, a friend of Pankratios, ruled. Not only does the figure of 600,000 parallel the army of the elder Aquilinus, but the whole situation repeats the first war: Aquilinus besieges the city, the inhabitants plot to kill Bonifatius and surrender the city to the adversary. Again, the weaker party wins, but this time not because of the personal valor of the defenders but because of the piety of the saint. Pankratios promised that Christ would take care of the besieged city, and that the victory would be achieved without sling, spear, bow or sword. Pankratios' weaponry was the icon and the cross, and armed with these he turned the enemy to flight (p. 404.4).

The story of Tauros and Menia occupies the middle part of the discourse, but unlike the story of Heliodoros it is compositionally no more than an insertion, a parenthesis. The activity of Pankratios begins before the appearance of Tauros and continues after Tauros disappears from the tale. While Heliodoros is the central figure, the anti-hero, of the *Vita*, Tauros is a central figure of a separate, albeit long episode. He has no part in the arduous process of the evangelization of Sicily and Calabria. Unlike the composition of the *Vita of Leo*, that of Pankratios' biography is ineptly arranged.

Nevertheless the story of Tauros and Menia is a tale of enormous significance, being the first Byzantine chivalrous story. It tackles mundane problems: love and jealousy, military prowess and struggle for authority. Its protagonists are beautiful, strong, courageous, and their principal virtue chastely faithfulness. We may call this tale a "perverse

romance" since it contains substantial elements of the ancient romance infused, however, with different ideological functions and colored by the parodical, and even grotesque, within the context of a hagiographical discourse.

Certainly, the *Vita of Pankratios* is verbose and iterative, the portraiture of heroes poor, the structure of the phrasing insipid. But a new approach is latent in the romantic adventures of Menia and Tauros.

Another "perverse romance" survived under the title *Vita and Acts (Praxeis) of the apostle Andrew*. It is not known when the apocryphal *Praxeis of Andrew* (attributed to a certain Leucius) were created.<sup>22</sup> They were rarely mentioned by Greek authors. Among the few who read them was Photios (*Bibl.*, cod. 114), who found the book extremely heretical. Nevertheless, later hagiographers probably based their work on the lost *Praxeis* by Leucius. One of these revisions was the *Vita, Acts, and Demise of the apostle Andrew* by a certain Epiphanius, monk and priest,<sup>23</sup> an obscure figure, whose identification with his namesakes, Epiphanius the Hagiopolites, the compiler of a guidebook (*Diegesis*) for a journey to Syria and Jerusalem,<sup>24</sup> and Epiphanius of the Constantinopolitan monastery Kallistratou, the author of the [earliest?] *Vita of the Virgin Mary*,<sup>25</sup> has been rejected by some scholars and accepted by others.<sup>26</sup> Since the author of the *Vita and Acts* was a contemporary of Iconoclasm, the commonly accepted date of Epiphanius (the beginning of the ninth century) is more or less secure. Epiphanius traveled widely in search of relics. He visited Nicaea and Nikomedeia, and dwelt in Sinope where the locals showed him the "thrones" of Peter and Andrew, the "signs" produced by Andrew and his icon, the prison from which the apostle rescued Matthias, and so on (PG 120, 220AB). Epiphanius is not a man of "urban culture", however; following the biblical tradition, he stresses that it was Cain who invented the *polis*. The apostle Andrew himself is represented as an eager traveler who visited many real and legendary locations.<sup>27</sup> The tale of his visits to various places and founding there of Christian bishoprics sooner or later acquired a political

<sup>22</sup> Reconstruction of the Acts (*Praxeis*)-Acta Andreae, ed. J.-M. PRIEUR, 2 vols., Turnhout 1989. Corpus of the legends of Andrew by R. A. LIPSUS - M. BONNET, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* II,1, Leipzig 1898, repr. Darmstadt 1959, 1-116.

<sup>23</sup> BHG 102; ed. A. DRESSEL, *Epiphanius monachi et presbyteri edita et inedita*, Paris-Leipzig 1843, 45-82, reproduced in PG 120, 216-260.

<sup>24</sup> H. DONNER, Palästinabeschreibung des Epiphanius Hagiopolita, *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 87, 1971, 42-91.

<sup>25</sup> DRESSEL, *Epiphanius*, 13-44, reproduced in PG 120, 186-216.

<sup>26</sup> Thus J. DRÄSEKE, Der Mönch und Presbyter Epiphanius, *BZ* 4, 1895, 350, distinguished them, whereas E. KURTZ, Ein bibliographisches Monitum, *BZ* 6, 1897, 216, assumes the possibility of the identity of the authors of the *Diegesis* and the *Vita and Acta*, but thinks that the *Enkomion of the Virgin* was a work of the eleventh century.

<sup>27</sup> See D. R. MACDONAL, *The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals*, Atlanta 1990.

purpose, an opposition of the Eastern ecclesiastical unity to the Western church.<sup>28</sup> Among other places, Andrew arrived at Patrae where he met the *anthypatos* of the region, Aegeatus by name, who was in despair and contemplating suicide because his wife Maximilla suffered from an incurable disease (col. 245AB). Andrew healed Maximilla, and under his influence she became Christian and decided to live in chastity. If the theme of the ancient romance was the reunification of lovers, the “perverse romance” by Epiphanius centers on Maximilla’s attempts to separate from Aegeatus, whose “bestial character and lawless behavior” she can no longer bear. Maximilla’s chastity, however, kills her “bestial” husband: having lost his reason, he got up in the dead of night (“there was a deep silence all around,” says Epiphanius) and jumped off the roof of his tall office-building (col. 260A). This episode, the pivotal moment in the *Vita* from a literary viewpoint, opens with Aegeatus’ desire to kill himself and ends with his suicide under demonic pressure, a strictly unchristian act, committed (with deliberate irony) at his praetorium, a place in which pagan governors used to condemn Christian martyrs to ordeal and death.

### C. “Concise historical notes”

AV. CAMERON and J. HERRIN, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai*, Leiden 1984

The anonymous text entitled *Concise (or Brief) Historical Notes* (Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικαί) is evidently a work of Constantinopolitan provenance. It is much more difficult to determine the time of its creation. Av. Cameron and J. Herrin, the commentators and translators of the *Parastaseis*, argue for a date as early as the beginning of the eighth century, “before the first Iconoclastic measures of Leo III in 726.” G. Millet placed it after the reign of Leo III, between 742 and 746,<sup>29</sup> C. Mango “in the middle of the eighth century,”<sup>30</sup> I. Ševčenko “around the year 800” or tentatively in 775-80, for the author displays “the rather muted show of sympathy for the monk Anastasius.”<sup>31</sup> O. Kresten, having rejected the date propounded by Cameron and Herrin as “falsch”, suggests that the

<sup>28</sup> F. DVORNIK, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, Cambridge Mass. 1958 [Dumbarton Oaks Studies 4]; cf. I. S. ČIČUROV, *Hoždenie apostola Andreja v vizantijskoj i drevnerusskoj literaturnoj tradicii, The Legacy of Sts Cyril and Methodius to Kiev and Moscow*, Thessalonike 1992, 195-213.

<sup>29</sup> G. MILLET, *Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικαί. Essai sur la date*, BCH 70, 1946, 402.

<sup>30</sup> C. MANGO, *Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder*, DOP 17, 1963, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. III, 60.

<sup>31</sup> I. ŠEVČENKO, *The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800*, DOP 46, 1992, 289f. and n. 51.

*Parastaseis* could not have been created before 775 and after 843.<sup>32</sup> G. Dagron thinks that the text was produced after 741 (since it mentions Leo III) and before 829 (because it does not allude to the reign of Theophilos).<sup>33</sup> P. Speck suggested a very complicated dating: the original of Late Antiquity or of the “Dark ages” was reworked in the ninth or tenth centuries.<sup>34</sup> There are no solid facts to date the *Parastaseis* definitively: “before 829” is based on an argumentum *ex silentio*, and the reign of Leo III is hardly possible, since Leo appears in the text under the derisive names of Konon and Isauros (commonly used by the authors of the ninth century, such as George the Monk [ed. De Boor 2, 735.13-14]), and “the emperor of our day” (p. 78.7), whoever he is, is distinct from Leo III. The monk Anastasios is said to have been burned in the Hippodrome “in our time” (p. 140.8), but we do not know who this Anastasios was and when his execution occurred.

The *Parastaseis* has neither preamble nor epilogue and consists of approximately a hundred episodes, which are either simple statements (for instance, “A great many statues came to Constantinople from the place called Ikonion, among them one of Zeus that is still in the Hippodrome”) or elaborate short stories. The key theme of these episodes is the monuments of Constantinople, primarily statues, and miraculous events connected with them. There is no inner coherence in the presentation of the episodes; neither chronological nor topographical nor thematic logic organize the sequence of episodes; each of them is an independent instance, and they could have been reshuffled without damaging the pattern of the discourse.

What is the purpose of the *Parastaseis*, or, to put it differently, what is the genre of the work? Mango defines the *Parastaseis* as “a kind of tourist’s guidebook to the curiosities of Constantinople,” but the book is too unsystematic to serve as a guidebook, and it lacks a comprehensive description of the city. Cameron and Herrin, having rejected the idea of a “guidebook”, see in the *Parastaseis* “the product... of a sort of local history society,” that “provides some testimony to the survival of pretensions to learning,”<sup>35</sup> and Ševčenko considers it a work of history, even though the features of historical genre are not firmly delineated.

<sup>32</sup> O. KRESTEN, *Leon III. und die Landmauer von Konstantinopel*, *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 36, 1994, 21-52. To his argumentation one more point might be added: the *Parastaseis* (p. 90.9-10) mentions a place in Constantinople where the corpses of convicts (καταδίκους) were thrown. The *Vita of Stephen the Younger* (PG 100, 1177C= M.-F. AUZÉPY, *La vie d’Étienne le jeune par Étienne le Diacre*, Aldershot 1997 [Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 3], 171.20) also mentions a cemetery of convicts (καταδίκων) established by Constantine V. The texts, however, place these cemeteries of convicts in different locations—but should we expect from the author of the *Parastaseis* a precise location?

<sup>33</sup> G. DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire*, Paris 1984 [Bibliothèque byzantine. Études 8], 29.

<sup>34</sup> P. SPECK, *War Bronze ein knappes Metall? Die Legende von dem Stier auf dem Bus in den ‘Parastaseis’* 42, *Hellenika* 39, 1988, 5f.

<sup>35</sup> CAMERON and HERRIN, *Constantinople*, 53.

At the same time all the scholars note (and it is difficult not to notice this particularity) the “impossible chronology and fantastic information” (Ševčenko) of this “curious” work (Cameron and Herrin). To cite a few examples, it is hard to imagine the existence of an immense (παμμεγέθης) river (p. 84.2-3) in the vicinity of St. Mamas. The author refers to Herodotus and another *chronographos* named Hippolytos who allegedly testified to the “fact” that Constantine the Great executed his son, who is characterized as his third child Constantine—in fact Crispus (not Constantine!), the victim of his father’s jealousy, was the eldest son of the emperor. The writer makes the mythical Byzas war against the historical Constantine the Great. After mentioning Theodora, he then calls Justinian I’s wife Sophia and adds that she was praised in iambic verses by the philosopher Ploumbas, whose existence is more than doubtful. The references to Eusebios, Sozomenos and Theodoretos are usually fraudulent, and Galen and Demosthenes are placed in a completely fantastical chronological framework. Sometimes scholars try to save the suspicious authorities quoted in the *Parastaseis*. Thus, the writer refers to the chronographer Ankyrianos who allegedly compiled a *Decalogue* cited by a certain Anastasios; in this work he described the destiny of some icons which the Arians schemed to have burned in the Milion. Al. Cameron identifies Ankyrianos as Nilus of Ankyra,<sup>36</sup> despite philological and factual obstacles: the man from Ankyra should be Ankyranus not Ankyrianus, no [commentary on?] *Decalogue* is known among Nilus’ works, and we do not know who might be the Anastasios who supposedly cited “Nilus”. Cameron’s arguments are conjectural: Nilus “mentions icons, attacks Arians, and was regularly cited in the Iconoclast controversy.” In any event, in the available works of Nilus there is no account of the Arians burning icons in the center of Constantinople. Much more probable than Cameron’s hypothesis is a suggestion that “Ankyrianos” belongs to the names “put in for effect alone” (to use the expression of Cameron himself).

These “errors” may be dismissed as an indication of a low level of eighth-century culture, while other elements of the discourse must surely, *a.* reflect Constantinopolitan topography and popular beliefs, and *b.* be the result from research (“We have taken great care to research accurately,” asserts the author [p. 88.12-13]), study of inscriptions, consultation with eyewitnesses, correspondence with colleagues and reading of sources now lost. Overall, however, there is not much that can be considered truly scientific in the discourse, that can be considered the fruit of the activity of a local historical society. Surely someone who was aware of the works of even such insignificant *literati* as Diakrinomenos or Milichios would not have given such utterly confused information about Herodotus, Galen and Eusebios. The writer did not care about the consistency of his statements: Verina, the wife of Leo I, he says, “was very Orthodox” (p. 92.11), and then, without batting an eyelid, he ends his account with the story of how Verina bewitched an island called Kranos (most probably fictitious). The *Parastaseis* needs to be viewed differently: it is not

<sup>36</sup> Al. CAMERON, A Quotation from S. Nilus of Ancyra in an Iconodule Tract?, *JThSt* 27, 1976, 128-131.

the victim of a low level of available information, but a parody, a play with historical (or, rather, pseudo-historical) facts and names.

Let us re-read the entertaining novelette (no. 37) about an elephant and the silversmith Karkinelos inserted in the description of the golden-roofed Basilica where the statues of the “tyrant” Justinian II and his wife had been erected. In this Basilica an elephant used to live. A monstrous beast dwelling in the golden-roofed Basilica is in itself a strange phenomenon, “an extraordinary spectacle”, as the author hastens to announce, but the ensuing events make the situation even more outlandish: the place of the elephant’s confinement is located on a mound (ὄρος, mountain, is Dagron’s emendation instead of the editor’s ὄρος, boundary-stone) with seventy-two steps—not the most convenient place for an elephant to climb. In the same area lived Karkinelos, a silversmith, who used rigged scales. He threatened the elephant’s keeper because (the elephant?) damaged his house, but the man did not want to keep the animal in check with “oil-bearing reins” (whatever this means). Finally, Karkinelos killed the elephant keeper and offered his corpse as food (εἰς βρῶσιν) to the beast, but the elephant killed him in turn.

The novelette is encased in a chaotic list of historical personages: the emperor Tiberios Apsimaros, the khan of Bulgaria Tervel, the Khazar ruler Ivouzeros Gliavanos (unheard of in any other source). Some minor figures precede the novelette of the elephant, and afterward we encounter the *hypatikos* Julian, consul Anthimos or Anthemios, prefect Nouzametos (probably all fictitious), as well as the mythical Byzas and Antes. The accumulation of historical sounding names serves to enhance the grotesqueness of the scene of the elephant climbing seventy-two steps to the gold-roofed Basilica, damaging a house on his way and being offered a corpse to eat.

Another novelette (no. 28) presents the author in conversation with the *chartoularios* Himerios about the name of the builder of the Kynegion (a district in central Constantinople). Nobody was close by except for the men who kept their mules there. As Himerios was expressing his view on the construction (wrong, according to the author) a statue fell down and killed him. The author reacted in a most strange way: he took Himerios by the right leg and dragged him to the place where the corpses of convicts were deposited. In his terror he abandoned his dead friend at the edge of the pit (?) and ran to the Great Church seeking asylum. No one believed his story, but he led the relatives of the dead man and the “friends” of the emperor to the place. To make the incredible story even more absurd the author ends it with the words of a certain philosopher, John, who found in the writings of Demosthenes a prediction that a man of significance would be killed by this statue. From Demosthenes he turns to the emperor Philippikos (prompted perhaps by the association of the name of king Philip of Macedonia, Demosthenes’ archenemy?) who ordered the burial of the statue. “Examine these things with truth (μετ’ ἀληθείας),” exclaims the story-teller addressing his [fictitious?] correspondent Philokalos, obviously trying to conceal his laughter.

A huge furnace in the shape of an ox where the emperor Julian burned many Christians, the porphyry statue of Constantine and his two sons with two legs and six arms,

a statue of another elephant set up in the Forum inside which the bones of a complete human body were discovered—all these fantastical objects and fantastical actions are not historical events; they are “improper”, parodical.

Dagron has proposed the very provocative idea that local *patria* were a Constantinopolitan genre intended to glorify the city and to debase the emperor. The emperor appears in the *Parastaseis*, in Dagron's words, “without ceremonial, being privatized, domesticated and serving primarily to designate time.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the anonymous author is, like Theophanes, critical of many emperors, and not only such men as Julian and Phokas, who were traditionally disparaged. Neither Constantine the Great nor Justinian I gets his due praise. While Byzantine historians are usually reticent about the murder of Crispus, the author of the *Parastaseis* made the thirteenth apostle the murderer of his own son, and the impossible statue of Constantine and his sons with two legs and six arms does not contribute much to the honor of the builder of Christian Constantinople.

The *Parastaseis* must have been written by a contemporary (or an immediate successor?) of the Iconoclastic disputes. The focus of Iconophile folklore was the cult of the icon and the supernatural power of the holy image denied by Iconoclastic polemics. The focus of the *Parastaseis* is the image and its supernatural power, but here the image is different: not the holy icon but the pagan statue, referred to primarily as *στήλη*, but also *ζώδιον*, *εἰδωλον*, *ἰνδαλμα*, etc., and, unexpectedly, *εἰκών*. While we read, in Orthodox fashion, about the icon of the incarnate Jesus Christ (p. 62.2-3) and about the icons of the bishops Metrophanes, Alexander and Paul (p. 68.13-15, 17), in other passages the term is applied (as in the *Select Chronography* by George the Synkellos) to non-religious objects such as the portraits of emperors (p. 124.5, 126.9) or a Cretan seer (p. 76.2), and once to the pagan statues in the Kynegion (p. 88.17). Unlike the Christian icon the pagan “image” of the *Parastaseis* does not work beneficial wonders but brings damage and death. There are a few exceptions: in the *kastron* Panormon a statue of a woman with two heads repelled the fire (as some saints did) that was devouring “the whole town”. Some statues represented the victims of injustice. Thus Constantine the Great set up a silver statue of his son whom he had beheaded, and he commemorated in statues several men whose execution he had ordered. The statue of the *koubikoularios* Plato, allegedly burned under the usurper Basiliskos, was set up by his parents.

The motif of miracle-working statues had a long history before the *Parastaseis* was written. Popular folklore assumed that statues were animated and able to intervene in human affairs.<sup>38</sup> Theophylaktos Simokatta (VIII, 13.7-14) describes the vision of a painter or calligrapher in Alexandria who saw at midnight the statues in front of the temple of Tyche leave their pedestals and address him, recording the downfall of the emperor Maurice and his execution that was taking place at that very moment far away in

<sup>37</sup> DAGRON, *Constantinople*, 315f.

<sup>38</sup> MANGO, *Antique Statuary*, 59.

Constantinople. Nine days later the official announcement of his death reached Alexandria. The legend became popular in the ninth century and was, in an abbreviated form, repeated by both Theophanes (p. 291.17-26) and George the Monk (ed. De Boor, p. 663.17-664.1). George returns several times to the theme of powerful pagan statues, such as the great and awesome *ἄγαλμα* of Serapis in Alexandria (p. 584.13-14) reminding us of various *ἄγάλματα* in the *Parastaseis* (p. 96.10, 98.9-10, 124.6-7), or a statue (*ἄγαλμα*) set up by a priest in Canopus that automatically poured water from a *hydria* and extinguished fire (George, p. 587.12-588.3). George relates that the emperor Arcadius put up his own statue (*ἄνδρις*) on a pillar in Xerolophos (p. 592.22-23), a story resembling the passage in the *Parastaseis* (p. 152.3-5) where the statues (*στήλαι*) of the emperors Theodosios II, Valentinian III and Marcian are described as being located on the pillars in Xerolophos.

Photios, too, was concerned with the magical function of ancient statues: he reproduced, from the fifth-century historian Olympiodoros, the story about three silver statues excavated in Thrace which represented barbarians with long hair looking toward the north. Immediately following this discovery, the Goths invaded Thrace while the Huns and Sarmatians raided Illyricum (Photios, *Bibl.*, cod. 80, vol. I, 177.33-5).

While folklore dealt with vivified statues, the author of the *Parastaseis* went much further than plain and simple belief in animated images: by accumulating innumerable stories of their activity, by treating of this activity ad absurdum, and by modeling this activity on the pious effect of venerated icons he created a parody both political and entertaining.

Let us return once more to Photios. Characterizing the book by Iamblichos *On the Statues*<sup>39</sup> Photios comments that Iamblichos treated idols or statues as divine and their actions as supernatural and surpassing human imagination. Then he fulminates: “He invented many incredible myths, he referred to many obscure cases, he was not ashamed to write many things which contradicted the observed [phenomena]” (*Bibl.*, cod. 215, vol. 3, 130.15-19). Photios words are written for Iamblichos, but this sentence could equally well apply to the *Parastaseis*.

<sup>39</sup> See on it A. GUDEMAN, *RE* 9, 1916, 1791, no. 6.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE PRINCELY NUN: KASSIA

#### *A. Biography*

Little is known about the life of Kassia (her name was also spelled Kasia, Eikasia or Ikasia).<sup>1</sup> Some chroniclers of the tenth century record that she participated in a bride-show (like Maria, the granddaughter of Philaretos the Merciful, almost two generations earlier) arranged in 830 for the young emperor Theophilos (829-42).<sup>2</sup> The story goes that Theophilos liked Kassia most and was ready to offer her the golden apple (and with it the crown) but her arrogant response made him change his mind. It was Theodora whom he finally chose as empress, whereas the jilted Kassia founded a monastery where she led the "philosophic life".

The extent to which the bride-show in general and the case of Theophilos in particular are the product of legend-making remains a matter of dispute. I. Rochov drew attention to

<sup>1</sup> The basic monographs on Kassia are K. KRUMBACHER, *Kasia*, SBAW, 1897, 305-370 and I. ROCHOV, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia*, Berlin 1967 [BBA 38]; cf. EAD., *Person, Werke und Nachleben der byzantinischen Dichterin Kassia*, *Helikon* 6, 1966, 705-715. After Rochov's book several articles of all-embracing character dealing with Kassia appeared: E. CATAFYGIOTOU TOPPING, *Women Hymnographers in Byzantium*, *Diptycha* 3, 1982-83, 107-110 and EAD., *The Psalmist, St. Luke and Kassia the Nun*, *BS/EB* 9, 1982, 199-210; C. CASETTI BRACH, *Donne copiste nella leggenda di Bisanzio*, *OChP* 41, 1975, 484-488; Ph. BLACHOPOULOU, *Βιβλιογραφικό δοκίμιο για την Κασ[σ]ία-Κασ[σ]ιανή*, *Byzantinos Domos* 1, 1987, 139-159; T. A. MESCHI, *Žizn' i tvorčestvo vizantijskoj poetessy IX veka Kassii*, *Autoreferat*, Tbilisi 1988 (the entire dissertation was published in Georgian: Tbilisi 1987); nun IGNATIJA, *Cerkovno-pesnotvorčeskie trudy inokini Kassii*, *Bogoslovskie Trudy* 24, 1983, 320-336 (without knowledge of scholarly literature).

<sup>2</sup> The date 830 was established by W. TREADGOLD, *The Problem of the Marriage of the Emperor Theophilus*, *GRBS* 16, 1975, 325-341, rather than 821/2 suggested by E. W. BROOK, *The Marriage of the Emperor Theophilus*, *BZ* 10, 1901, 540-545.

the independent version found in the *Vita of the empress Theodora*,<sup>3</sup> Kassia's victorious rival, describing the same contest from the view-point of the empress' panegyrist; Kassia, however, is not mentioned in the *vita*. To the same effect, E. Lipšic interpreted gnomic poems by Kassia (in which the poet condemned those who bear malice and chastised foolishness) as reflecting her failure at the bride-show.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the golden apple, a folklore symbol of erotic desire, indicates, according to J. Psichari, a legendary etiology for the episode.<sup>5</sup>

The *Patria* of Constantinople is aware that Kassia, the beautiful woman who wrote poetry during the reigns of Theophilos and Michael III, founded a monastery in the capital (Preger, *Scriptores*, 276f.). This information supports at least a part of the story concerning the bride-show, namely that Kassia became, at a certain stage in her life, a nun, although the *Patria* does not say that she became a nun after or as a result of her failed attempt to marry into the imperial family.

Three letters of Theodore of Stoudios (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, nos. 217, 370 and 539) are addressed to Kassia; in the lemmata of two of them she is titled *kandidatissa*. G. Fatouros dates two letters to 816-18 and the third to 821-26. The Kassia of the letters belonged to the higher echelons of society: one of her relations was a *strategos* who had recently died, without having broken off community with the Iconoclasts. Theodore praises not only Kassia's piety and her support of persecuted Iconodule monks, but also the style of her writing which he finds astonishing in a young girl (ep. 370.1-6). Theodore says that Kassia "from childhood became Christ's bride" (ep. 217.10), and her contact with Christ presaged her monastic perfection just as smoke precedes the flame (ep. 370.22-23). If we assume that by 818 the young Kassia was already a nun or novice, her identification with the heroine of the legend of the beauty contest of 830 becomes difficult,<sup>6</sup> but Theodore's language is vague, and it is not impossible that he was speaking about a moral trend rather than a formal step. Rochov, in any event, identifies the addressee of Theodore's missives as the poetess Kassia.

However, Kassia's biography can be established only hypothetically, especially since it depends on her identification with the addressee of the Stoudite's letters. If we assume the historicity of the bride-show tale, Kassia must have been born around 810. She was thus very young when Theodore, ca. 818, praised the high quality of her writing. She belonged

<sup>3</sup> ROCHOV, *Studien*, 14-16; cf. A. MARKOPOULOS, Βίος τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας Θεοδώρας (BHG 1731), *Symmeikta* 5, 1983, 259f.

<sup>4</sup> LIPŠIC, *Očerki*, 320f.

<sup>5</sup> J. PSICHARI, Kassia et la pomme d'or, *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences historiques et philologiques*, 1910-11, 5-53. A. LITTLEWOOD, The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature, *JÖB* 23, 1974, 47f., assumes, notwithstanding the folklore character of the use of the apple, the possibility of a real bride-show arranged for Theophilos.

<sup>6</sup> This difficulty is clearly formulated by FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 365\* n. 719. The difficulty remains even if we accept BROOK's (as above, n. 2) date of 821/2.

to the monachophile and Iconophile milieu, even though among her relatives there was at least one high-ranking Iconoclast. Her title of *kandidatissa* remains enigmatic: Rochov thinks that her father was a *kandidatos*, although this title normally designates the wife of a *kandidatos*. Her Iconophile views (rather than her arrogance) surely hampered her marriage with Theophilos. In frustration at the misfortune she had inflicted upon herself, she turned to the life of the nunnery, or possibly she was directed to the convent by command of the angry emperor. If, however, the story of the bride-show is mere legend and the letters of Theodore were sent to another Kassia, the whole biography falls apart. We can be sure only that Kassia lived in the first half of the ninth century and that she was a nun in a Constantinopolitan convent.

### B. Troparion on Mary Magdalene and other liturgical poetry

Ed. with English translation A. TRIPOLITIS, *Kassia: The Legend, the Woman, and her Work*, New York-London 1992

Various hymns and secular poems have survived under Kassia's name. Rochov minutely surveyed her corpus<sup>7</sup> indicating, among other things, how hard it is, in many a case, to tell her genuine works from spurious ones. One example is the *Kanon for Holy Saturday* by Kosmas the Melode. The first four odes of this kanon were previously written by the "noble and wise virgin (nun?) Kassia" according to an oral tradition known to Theodore Prodromos in the twelfth century. According to Prodromos' account, a certain Mark, bishop of Hydrount (Otranto), was commissioned to replace Kassia's *troparia*, since it was considered unsuitable to mix "feminine composition" with the words of Kosmas (PG 133, 1235D-1237A). Prodromos' statement is paralleled and confirmed by the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Continuatus (p. 365.21-24) who narrates that in the days of Leo VI (886-912) "the wisest monk Mark" (defined here not as "bishop of Otranto" but as the *oikonomos* of the monastery of St. Mokios [in Constantinople], evidently the same person) expanded (or restored) the *tetraodion* of Kosmas. G. Schirò considers this information legendary and attributes the entire kanon to Kosmas,<sup>8</sup> whereas Rochov sees in Kassia the original author of the first *tetraodion*. A *Sticheron for Adrian and Natalia* is attributed in some manuscripts to a certain Ephraim of Caria, in others to Kassia; a manuscript (cod. Athous Vatop. 1493)

<sup>7</sup> Besides her monograph cited above, see the survey of additional findings in: I. ROCHOV, Neues zu den Hymnen der Kassia aus Cod. Meteor. Metamorphoseos 291, in J. DUMMER-J. IRMSCHER-K. TREU (eds.), *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Berlin 1981 [TU 125], 495-498.

<sup>8</sup> G. SCHIRÒ, La seconda leggenda di Cassia, *Diptycha* 1, 1979, 303-315.



bears the lemma "Of Ephrem or the nun Ikasia". Rochov suggests that "Ikasia/Kassia" is the distorted "Caria", a scribe's interpretation of the Καρία. The assumption of two different traditions is a more plausible explanation.

One of the most famous poems of Kassia is the *Hymn for Holy Wednesday*, a *troparion* on Mary Magdalene (the hymn was eventually titled *On the harlot*, Mary's name never being mentioned), republished, translated and ingeniously commented on by A. Dyck.<sup>9</sup> It is not the first time that the "sinful woman" of the Gospel of Luke (7. 37-48), who wet Christ's feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, appears in Greek poetry: Romanos the Melode devoted to her a *kontakion*. Romanos, as Dyck emphasizes, follows the plot of the Gospel, contrasting Mary with Simon the Pharisee and proclaiming true love higher than formal veneration. Kassia, on the other hand, turns from the sphere of human morals to the metaphysical relation between the sinner and God: the heroine of her hymn cherishes no claim to be better than anybody else (a pharisee, for instance), but in her humbleness she genuflects before the Lord and asks for His forgiveness.

The poem opens with a short, four-line preamble: the woman fallen into many sins brings Christ myrrh (unguents) for burial. The preamble is not a simple statement of this fact: "O Lord," exclaims the poet as if introducing her heroine, "[here is] the woman fallen in many sins" who in tears brings myrrh. In other words, the author, already in the first lines, is personally involved in Mary's destiny. In the preamble, we are at the end of the story: Christ is dead, and Mary assists at his burial. Yet at the same time, we are at the beginning of events: the harlot recognized Christ's divinity (at the banquet of Simon the Pharisee which Kassia has no need to mention, since her audience knew the Gospel) and accepted the function (τάξις, an important Byzantine term designating "office" and, in a broader sense, "order") of the bearer of myrrh (μυροφόρος), the epithet which became the title of Mary Magdalene (it was used in the early seventh century by Modestos of Jerusalem; cf. PG 86/2, 3276A). Thus the beginning and the end of events merge, time is eliminated, and the poem transcends the realities of the narrated saga.

The rest of the poem is a direct actorial speech, Mary's words addressed to God. She begins with a dramatic exclamation "Woe's me! (ὦ μοι)," a loan from ancient tragedy frequently employed by hagiographers and hymnographers about to mention some frightful fact or situation. She laments: "A gloomy moonless night, a goad of lewdness, a lust for sin, overwhelms me." The epithets of darkness, an obvious characteristic of night, are extended in the poem to the sensual desires of the sinful woman. Kassia does not put the finger on the kind of sin (as she avoids indicating Mary by name); fornication is not mentioned expressly, but the metaphors used by the poet, "the goad of lewdness" and "the lust for sin", are the keys to the heroine's past. It seems that at this point Kassia turns to the episode of Simon's banquet: the streams of tears, the kisses, the wiping of feet with the

<sup>9</sup> A. DYCK, On Cassia, Κύριε ἢ ἐν πολλαῖς, *Byzantion* 56, 1986, 63-76. Cf. as well E. CATAFYGIOTOU TOPPING, Kassiane the Nun and the Sinful Woman, *GOTHr* 26, 1981, 201-209.

locks of her hair—all these actions are borrowed from the Gospel, but in the poem they acquire a specific role, they are humble elements of everyday life opposed to the omnipotence of the Supreme Being: "Receive the streams of [my] tears, [Thou] Who siphon the water of the sea up to the clouds";<sup>10</sup> "Listen to the groans of my heart, Thou, Who lay low the heavens by your ineffable emptiness";<sup>11</sup> "I shall kiss and wipe Thy immaculate feet," that is, the feet which could not be dirty, which are above ordinary washing. Thus Kassia continues to characterize the mighty feet: "Eve, as she heard their footfalls in Paradise, hid herself in fear." In other words, the sinful woman recognizes the incarnate Christ's divinity. He is then given the attributes, and becomes the incorporeal divinity of Genesis and the Psalms; this is emphasized by the abundant use of biblical, primarily psalmic, vocabulary in Kassia's *troparion*.

God is omnipotent, the heroine is feeble. Moreover, she is sinful. "Who will be able to measure," she exclaims, "the number of my vices and the abyss of my crimes?" The peak of repentance is reached, and Kassia slows down (the last two lines are much shorter than the two preceding them) and in utterly prosaic manner presents the final opposition: Mary knows that her vices cannot be measured, but she solicits God Who has immeasurable mercy, "Please, forgive [lit. do not disregard] Thy bondsmaid."

Dyck stresses correctly that the poem begins on a milder note which then rises sharply with the onset of the actorial speech and continues to ascend until it comes to the climax. The use of rhetorical figures is restrained, and the language is simple. Alliteration is rare and subtle (e.g. ψυχροῦστα σωτήρ μου). Artistic play is contained mainly in contrasts and the double sense of cardinal words. As in Andrew's *Megas Kanon*—only here in a very condensed form—the individual expectation of salvation becomes extended

<sup>10</sup> Unlike Dyck, we understand νεφέλαις not instrumental ("who use clouds to draw the water") but as dative of motion to: "in the direction of the clouds." The reading στήμονίζων is preferable. The metaphor seems to be "to draw up or empty liquids (i.e. siphon) from a container with a thread of wool"; cf. PLATO, *Symposium* 175D (the alternate reading διεξάγων is the simplification of an unclear metaphor). Ps. 134.7 renders a similar idea: the omnipotent Lord "brings up the mist (νεφέλας) from the ends of the earth."

<sup>11</sup> Again the lines need a commentary. Firstly, the verb κάμφθητι, "bend", and the participle κλίνας, "causing to slope," have in principle similar meanings, but different semantic functions in these lines; they should be translated differently (Dyck renders them through the same verb "to bend"), even though by so doing we lose the play of the original. Secondly, κένωσις is a very important theological concept, and Dyck's "abasement" and Tripolitis' "humiliation" would be proper, unless another possibility emerged. The word designates first of all "emptiness", and Kassia evidently played on its double meaning. The confirmation of our explanation is found in the anonymous drama *Christus Patiens* (vers. 2418-2420) in which Mary Magdalene is said to be the first to have arrived at Christ's tomb and to have witnessed its κένωσις: by having "emptied" his grave (i.e. by being resurrected), says Kassia, Christ subjugated the heavens. Cf. τάφου κένωσις in PHOTIOS, *Homily XII on Holy Saturday*, ed. B. LAOURDAS, *Φωτίου ὁμιλίαι*, Thessalonike 1959 [Hellenika. Suppl. 12], 123.14.

to all mankind; the specific vice is blurred, and Mary's cry of the heart is the expression of everyman's psychological suffering: I am a sinner but God is merciful. Unlike Clement, Mary (and Kassia with her) searches for salvation not as a reward for any achievement (least of all, poetic), but in the sincere hope for divine mercy.

The elegance of the poem on Mary Magdalene becomes especially evident when compared with Kassia's huge *Kanon for the Repose of the Dead* which deals with the same theme of forgiveness and salvation. The main idea of the kanon is graphically expressed in ode 3 (further on we follow Tripolitis' translation with a few alterations): "My Savior, when the dead in fear and haste run from the graves and from the sound of the trumpet and when Thy fearful angels run to meet them, o Lord, have consideration for the departed and place them in the land of [eternal] life." There is no individual atonement in the kanon, despite the use on one occasion of the first person ("In deep sorrow I address Thee"), and the supplicant does not ask for herself but for mankind in the most sweeping generalization: "Savior, overlook Thy slaves' transgressions done in ignorance and knowingly alike." Nor is there in the rest of the kanon any further development of the theme: already in the first ode it is stated that God might give eternal life to all mortals and return them to the sinless state of Eden. Similar formulas are repeated throughout the whole text, until in the last ode the poet asks the Giver of Life to grant the dead rest among the saints. The imagery of God the Judge and, in a Byzantine manner, the Treasurer (ταμίης), of His formidable court of justice, and of the mortals trembling before the day of reckoning dominates the kanon, but there is no place there for the touching figure of the frail sinner washing the feet of the Savior with her tears and drying them with her locks of hair. In the concluding *theotokion* of the kanon, Kassia—if she is the author of the *theotokion* (*theotokia* had a tendency to travel from poet to poet, unless they were "signed" as in Clement's case)—suddenly shifts to another topic and moves to the political situation of the empire: she asks Christ to crown the faithful *basileus* and to destroy with military force and the help of the Theotokos the power of the adversary. We may interpret the power or sovereignty (κράτος) of the adversary as the Caliphate, but who is the faithful *basileus* of the *theotokion*? Could Kassia have given such a title to the Iconoclast Theophilus, the man who rejected her claims to the throne and condemned her to monastic confinement? Or was he possibly the young Michael III, who in theory participated in the most pious restoration of the cult of icons in 843? Or is the *theotokion* nothing more than a formulaic exclamation bearing no concrete significance? As Heinrich Heine put it, a fool can ask more questions than a hundred wizards are able to answer.

A completely different character marks Kassia's hymn (*sticheron*) *On the Birth of Christ* (in Tripolitis, "When Augustus reigned"). The motif of salvation is hardly mentioned (only in stanza 6), whereas the imperial theme is systematically elaborated. The first lines emphasize the idea of a universal kingdom: when Augustus established monarchy upon the earth, the *polyarchia* of men ceased to exist. And again: the cities have come under a single kingdom, and the decree of Caesar held sway over the [entire] population. Political unity

has been accompanied by ideological conformity: the polytheism of idols was abolished, and the nations came to believe in the authority of the single Divinity.

Parallelism between the Heavenly Kingdom and earthly empire (one God, a universal monarchy) is a concept which Theodore of Stoudios would not, probably, have approved of. Theosteriktos, the hagiographer of Niketas of Medikion, quotes Theodore's declaration addressed to Leo V, in which the Stoudite, referring to *Ephes.* 4.11, insisted emphatically that authority over the Church lay with the apostles, prophets, shepherds and teachers, but in no way with the emperors.<sup>12</sup> But Kassia, who in the kanon *For the Repose of the Dead* asked God to crown and to protect the emperor, felt comfortable with such a parallelism. With the parallel established in the introduction to the *sticheron*, the poet turns to the glory of the incarnate God: He Who abased (the term κένωσις, however, is absent from the poem) Himself by accepting flesh from a woman, by lying in a manger, by becoming poor is, contrastingly and startlingly, praised by angels, worshipped by the Magi and shepherds, adored as Lord by all creation. He is the Sun of Glory, and the heavens glorified Him in fear (a similar feature to the poem on Mary Magdalene where Christ, having emptied his grave, subjugated the heavens).

The *sticheron On the Annunciation*<sup>13</sup> consists of two parts: the mission of Gabriel and the Good Tidings itself. Another *sticheron On the Annunciation* is authored by a certain John the Monk (*Menaia*, March 25), and a comparison of the two pieces reveals several hallmarks of Kassia's style. The first part of Kassia's poem is bound together by an anaphora. Three times paragraphs begin with the word ἀπεστάλη, was sent: the angel Gabriel was sent, the fleshless slave was sent, the heavenly warrior was sent. The incipit of the hymn by John is also "Was sent (he adds: from Heaven)," but there is no anaphora in the poem. *Chairetismos* which consolidates the second part of Kassia's *sticheron* is employed by John as well.

More interesting is another distinction. John's epithets for the Theotokos are banal: "full of grace", "unwed bride". Kassia, however, fills her text with imperial epithets: her Mary is a palace, a throne, a regal seat. Certainly, definitions of other kinds are used as well: "most honored vessel" and "unhewn mountain"; both metaphors stress Mary's role as the receptacle in which the Godhead dwelt bodily. Unlike Kassia, the Monk avoids imperial terminology.

A *sticheron For Eustratios and Companions* (one of two hymns in their honor) is probably the most rhetorical in Kassia's liturgical corpus. The introductory lines form a double numerical metaphor: "The five-stringed lute and five-fold lamp." The metaphor is strengthened by alliteration: λύραν-λυχνίαν. Then follows a klimax, a use of synonyms in a symmetrical construction: "Let us honor [the martyrs] for their deeds (in Greek a single

<sup>12</sup> AASS April. I, p. XXV, par. 35. The declaration is repeated in George the Monk 2, 779.20-23.

<sup>13</sup> ROCHOV, *Studien*, 52, no. 39, finds the attribution of the poem to Kassia "recht wahrscheinlich". Her name is attached to the *sticheron* in numerous manuscripts, whereas others indicate an Anatolios as its author.

adverb φερωνύμως), let us praise [them] reverently (εὐσεβῶς).” The main body of the poem is exactly what can be called a “pheronymic” laudation, since Kassia interprets, with the help of rhetorical etymology, the names of the martyrs: Eustratios served (στρατευθείς) under God in the heavenly army (στρατεία) and was well-pleasing to his commander (στρατολογήσαντι); Auxentios increased (ἐπαυξήσας) his talent (reference to *Matth.* 25.20 and 22); Eugenios is the scion of divine nobility (εὐγενείας); Orestes is beautiful (ὠραῖος), dwelling in God’s mountains (ὄρεσιν); Mardarios is a radiant pearl (μαργαρίτης). The entire etymological list is knitted together by a *chairetismos*, which supplements the five-fold group of male saints with the equal-numbered chorus of virgins.

Several poems of Kassia are laudations of saints. Unfortunately, their attribution is usually tentative, and Rochov identifies Kassia as the unquestionable author of only a few of them: several stichera on John the Baptist and one on the apostles Peter and Paul, the latter being anonymous in the printed *Menaia* and ascribed to Andrew of Crete in some manuscripts; two *Hymns on Eustratios and Companions* and a sticheron *On the martyrs Gourias, Samonas and Abibos*. None of these saints is a hero of the Iconodule movement: unlike Clement or Joseph, Kassia is indifferent toward the problems of Iconoclasm, or perhaps reticent after her encounter with the young prince.

Many of Kassia’s hymns are devoted to female saints. Besides the genuine *troparion* on Mary Magdalene, to this group belong several spurious poems: five *stichera* for Christina, stichera for Mary of Egypt, Pelagia, Barbara, Agathe, Thekla, and Eudokia of Heliopolis. We may add to this list Natalia, the heroine of the *sticheron* on the couple Adrian and Natalia, and the five-fold chorus of virgins in a *sticheron* for Eustratios. Since the authorship of Kassia in the majority of cases is no more than possible or likely, conclusions can be only tentative, but it is striking how frequent female saints appear in her poetry (male saints in Kassia’s spurious poems are the prophet Elias, the evangelist Matthew, Theodore the Teron, Symeon the Stylite, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa and Euthymios the Great). Not only are female saints in Kassia’s work numerically more or less equal to holy men, but their choice is strangely balanced: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Egypt, Pelagia and Eudokia are all former prostitutes. Eudokia is less famous than her three companions, but in the sticheron in her honor “tears [of repentance]” and “harlot” are the key words. It would be taking a bold step indeed to claim on the basis of this evidence that Kassia herself was a former prostitute,<sup>14</sup> but it seems that she was deeply interested in the fate of her erring sisters.

A hypothesis that Kassia authored the *Akathistos Hymn*<sup>15</sup> has no scholarly justification.

<sup>14</sup> DYCK, *On Kassia*, 73f., rightly criticizes the “biographical fallacy”, the tendency to identify the author with the literary subject.

<sup>15</sup> ANDREOPOULOS, ‘Ο Ἀκάθιστος ὕμνος. Σχέψεις περὶ τοῦ συγγραφέως αὐτοῦ, *Ekklesiastikon bema*, 1934, 10-20. See the refutation by S. EUSTRATIADES, rev. of the book of E. MIONI on *Romanos the Melode*, *EEBS* 15, 1939, 442-444.

### C. Epigrams and gnomai

Kassia’s *œuvre* includes *gnomai* and epigrams<sup>16</sup> which are classed by several scholars as secular poetry. The gnomological genre, that is, the genre of maxims or sayings-admonitions, sometimes growing into elaborate fables, was very popular in late antiquity, maxims being formulated primarily in prose (Stobaios in the fourth-fifth centuries was a representative of this genre). It influenced the Christian *florilegia* and the so-called *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the ethical and theological sayings attributed to famous hermits, and itself gradually lost its secular character. The distinction between *florilegia* and *gnomologia* is conventional, the name of *florilegium* being preserved primarily for the collections of biblical and patristic passages, whereas the term *gnomai* (maxims) is applied to the works of a predominantly secular nature. Numerous gnomological collections were produced in Byzantium: they are mostly anonymous or pseudonymous (the names of Maximos [the Confessor] and Antony are arbitrarily attached to some of them), and their dating usually remains uncertain.<sup>17</sup>

Kassia’s sayings are in verse (mostly iambic trimeter),<sup>18</sup> though written without proper attention to prosody and meter. They are usually short, consisting of one or two lines (*gnomai* proper), rarely longer (epigrams) as, for instance, the disparaging poem on the Armenians.<sup>19</sup> In their content, they present moral admonitions, quite trivial in nature, though direct borrowings from her predecessors are few. Thus the three-line epigram *On Destiny*, carrying man along willy-nilly (Tripolitis, p. 130.16-18), an epigram built on the somewhat excessive use of paronomasia (the noun φέρον and verb φέρειν are repeated nine times), imitates a distich by Palladas (*Anthologia Palatina* X.73).<sup>20</sup> The *gnomai* are

<sup>16</sup> Besides collections known to KRUMBACHER (as above, n. 1), B. A. MYSTAKIDES, *Κασσία-Κασσιανή*, *Orthodoxia* 1, 1926, 247-251, 314-319, published *gnomai* of a different version. See on Kassia’s maxims and epigrams, E. LIPŠIC, *K voprosu o svetskih teženijah v vizantijskoj kul’ture IX v. (Kasija)*, *VizVrem* 4, 1951, 135-148; M. LAUXTERMANN, *The Byzantine Epigram in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, Amsterdam 1994, 107-127.

<sup>17</sup> C. WACHSMUTH, *Studien zu den griechischen Florilegien*, Berlin 1882, repr. Amsterdam 1971; J. GLETTNER, *Die Progymnasmata des Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos*, *BZ* 33, 1933, 262-264; M. RICHARD, *Florilèges spirituels grecs*, *DSP* 5, fasc. 33-34, col. 475-510, repr. as *Florilèges grecs* in ID., *Opera minora* I, Turnhout-Louvain 1976, no. 1; D. GUTAS, *Greek Wisdom Literature in Arabic Translation: a Study of the Graeco-Arabic Gnomologia*, New Haven 1975, 9-35. Cf. as well P. ODORICO, *Lo Gnomologium Byzantinum e la recensione del Cod. Bibl. Nat. Athen. 1070*, *RSBS* 2, 1982, 41-70; J. F. KINDSTRAND, *Gnomologium Byzantinum and Codex Clarkianus II*, *Byzantion* 60, 1990, 164-182.

<sup>18</sup> P. MAAS, *Metrisches zu den Sentenzen der Kassia*, *BZ* 10, 1901, 54-59.

<sup>19</sup> Ed. C. A. TRYPANIS, *Medieval and Modern Greek Poetry*, Oxford 1951, 43, no. 6.

<sup>20</sup> G. LUCK, *Palladas—Christian or Pagan?*, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63, 1958, 470, n. 71.

combined in clusters treating such topics as friendship, hatred and envy, men and women, wealth and poverty, while a substantial group of sayings deals with the monastic order.

Whether original or trivial, and perhaps depending on Aesopic tradition and an unknown *corpus* of monastic epigrams (as Lauxtermann suggested), Kassia's poetry nevertheless expresses a system of ethical views. She praises "good symmetry" but it is not the classical symmetry of body and mind. The drop of luck is more desirable than external beauty (κάλλος μορφῆς), and certainly grace bestowed by the Lord is better than beauty and wealth. As for beauty itself, a good complexion or countenance (εὐχροία) is more valuable than the symmetry of limbs. On the other hand, ugliness is not a virtue ("What a misfortune, what an ill fate [Kassia uses an important philosophical term εἰμαρμένη, probably ironically] if a woman is ugly" [Tripolites, p. 120.13-14]), but a quality one has to endure: a man physically disabled retorts to a certain fornicator and liar who ridiculed him that he is not the cause of his misfortune, that in no way did he want to be like this; the morally crippled person, however, is the instrument of his own perversity for he did not receive from the Creator the vices he entertains.

One human quality attracts Kassia's special attention —stupidity. Stupidity is incurable: to improve a fool (μωρός) is as impossible as to bend (we remember that the verb holds an important place in the *troparion* on Mary Magdalene) a huge pillar. It is disastrous if a fool is knowledgeable, notes Kassia: the fool's knowledge is foolish, the fool's knowledge is a bell on a pig's snout, but even worse is a fool who is young and powerful. "Alas and woe!" exclaims Kassia when she confronts such a person (she fills a single line with five synonymous exclamations), using the vocabulary of ancient tragedy (see, for example, Aesch. *Prom.* 577) which she employs also in the *troparion* on Mary Magdalene. To designate a fool Kassia creates a neologism, περισσοπράκτωρ, "one who exacts too much taxation",<sup>21</sup> possibly hinting at the imperial administration in which the *praktor* was an important financial official.

Can the diatribe against the fool be connected with the reality of Kassia's life? Can we see, together with E. Lipšic, in the young and powerful fool the figure of Theophilus who foolishly ruined the imperial ambitions of the wise Kassia? There is no simple answer to such a question. On the one hand, invectives against the fool (the same word μωρός is used) are numerous in the *Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach*, and the poet surely knew and imitated these. On the other hand, the well-known formulas could be applied to real situations: *Siracides'* maxim (21.18), "The wisdom of the fool is a string of ill-digested sayings," supplemented by the verse of *Is.* 32.6, "The fool speaks out foolishness," is used by George the Monk (ed. De Boor 2, 784.8-9) unabashedly in his polemic against the Iconoclastic views of Leo V.

The interpretation of beauty/ugliness and stupidity in Kassia's *gnomai* is not consistently orthodox. Even less orthodox is her confession of cherishing hatred. "I hate,"

<sup>21</sup> TRIPOLITIS, *Kassia*, 125, translates "neutrally" —"inclined to overdo", without taking into consideration the Byzantine words περισσοπρακτέω and περισσοπρακτία (see LAMPE, s.v.).

she begins, and proceeds to make a long list of those whom she hates. Certainly, among the victims of her hatred is the fool claiming to be a philosopher, but some figures are less expected: the rich man complaining he is poor and the poor man acting like a tycoon, the debtor who slumbers careless of his obligations, the gluttonous, the windbag. Three lines deal with inverted justice: Kassia hates the murderer who judges others of having a quick temper, the adulterer who judges the fornicator, and the judge who is guilty of favoritism.<sup>22</sup>

While in her view hatred (of wrong-doing) is justified, envy is not. Kassia treats envy from a consistently Christian position. Envy is always evil: it is born of vanity, from the success of other people, and it should be annihilated by brotherly love, by fear of God and by humility. The poet takes a step further: envy, she says, is futile, it gains nothing, it destroys the one who has it. And friendship is interpreted on Christian premises. Only friendship founded in Christ is acceptable, whereas the world is teeming with bogus friends: beware of ungrateful friends, slanderers and fools who are like serpents. A loving friend, she says this time in a quite un-Christian manner, resembles a weighty hoard of gold.

A contemporary of Theodore of Stoudios and possibly one of his correspondents, Kassia is very positive in her appreciation of monasticism. "The life of a monk," she says, "is a lamp shining for all." But at the same time she does not approve of the Stoudite's stubborn resistance to the authorities: "Do not kick against the pricks with your bare feet," she proclaims, as if censuring precisely what Theodore did throughout his whole life.

While many contemporaries of Kassia professed great admiration for brevity of speech they nevertheless could not resist the temptation to extend their monotonous works beyond all reasonable limits: Ignatios' *Vita of the patriarch Nikephoros* is one example, and the ninth-century writers of kanons, albeit inferior to Andrew of Crete in terms of length, were able to put their audience through a considerable endurance test. Kassia did not profess brevity, but she practiced it. Her religious hymns, with some exceptions (the canon *For the Repose of the Dead* being one of the few), are *stichera* slightly exceeding twenty lines, and the genre of *gnomai* and epigrams required a tightly compacted style. Of course, her sayings are rhetorical. Her favorite play is polyptoton and similar figures which bind the sentence lexically: "Allow a loving lover (in the original, φίλος, friend) to love [you], but in vain it is to be loved by one without right feeling"; here φίλος and related words are repeated four times in two lines. Alliteration also ties the sentence together, but to do this it uses similarity of sounds not words: "Make rich your friends with riches of your richness" —here polyptoton πλουτῶν-πλούτου is braced with a word of a different root but beginning with the same sound, πλήθυνον.

Necessity for concise self-expression in maxims compelled Kassia to use the most economic form of figures —aphorism, usually based on a contrast, and even oxymoron: "A

<sup>22</sup> TRIPOLITIS, *Kassia*, 111, translates "takes orders from individuals". The words προσέχοντα προσώποις are connected with the idea of προσωποληψία, "favoritism" (cf. *Rom.* 2.11, *Coloss.* 3.25).

friend saves a friend, and a land [saves] a land"; "Wealth covers the greatest of evils, but poverty reveals all kinds of evil"; and, "The word of an honest man is like an oath, but there is deception in the oath of a mean one." Kassia's similes and metaphors are also concise and economic: the loving friend is a hoard of gold, the foolish one a serpent, genuine friends are better than gold and pearls, their love is a protective fence; the prudent man is the emperor (αὐτοκράτωρ) of his passions; like a viper envy tears apart one who entertains it; stupidity is a bell on a pig's snout; it is milk and honey to be with your kin. Kassia avoids tautology, accumulation of synonyms and hendiadys, so typical of the lengthier forms of Byzantine literature. There is neither reason nor place for them in the muscular genre of gnomology.

Following tradition, Kassia sometimes stresses the difficulty of finding a proper expression. She begins the kanon *For the repose of the dead* with a pessimistic statement: "Who is able to describe (ἐκφράσαι) the fathomless depth of Christ's wisdom?" And at the end of the *troparion* for Mary Magdalene she says: "Who is able to fully trace (ἐξιχνιάσει) the abyss of my sins?" She was, however, able to describe and to trace feelings and observations which occupied her thoughts.

It is noteworthy that Kassia was not the only female writer of the ninth century. Theodosia is known as the author of a kanon *For Ioannikios the Great* produced, probably, soon after the saint's demise in 846.<sup>23</sup> She praises Ioannikios as an ideal monk and celebrates his victory over "the swords of the enemies", evidently the Iconoclasts, since she also describes the Iconoclastic persecutions as a tempest of evil forces. She unquestionably belonged to the camp of the Iconodules.

Another woman hymnographer was Thekla, the author of a *Kanon on the Virgin*, which E. Catafygiotou Topping characterizes as having been written by a woman about women and for women.<sup>24</sup> We know even less about Thekla and Theodosia than we do about Kassia, but we may assume that female hymnography was an extraordinary feature of the ninth century.

Not only did women cease to produce poetry in the tenth century, but the works of the ninth-century women seem to have fallen into oblivion shortly after: we have seen that Kassia's odes in the kanon *For Holy Saturday* were probably rewritten ca. 900 by the otherwise unknown monk or bishop Mark [of Otranto?], and Theodosia's *Kanon for Ioannikios* was not included in the *Menaia*, but was replaced by a [later?] work of Joseph [the Hymnographer?]. Less clear is the fate of the hymn of Thekla *On the Virgin*: some stanzas of this kanon are inserted in a poem attributed (at least in part) to Clement.

<sup>23</sup> Ed. A. KOMINIS in AHG 3, 122-133. On her see E. CATAFYGIOTOU TOPPING, Theodosia: Melodos and Monastria, *Diptycha* 4, 1986-8, 384-405.

<sup>24</sup> On her see E. CATAFYGIOTOU TOPPING, Thekla the Nun: In Praise of Women, *GOTHr* 25, 1980, 353-370.

## CHAPTER NINE

### PEACEFUL BUT SAINTLY CAREER: IOANNIKIOS AND HIS KIND

#### A. The life of Ioannikios the Great

There are two major figures of the first half of the ninth century in the tradition of the Iconodule party: Theodore of Stoudios and Ioannikios the Great. They belonged to the same generation, and in 823 Theodore sent Ioannikios a letter (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, ep. 461), but it is difficult to imagine more contrasting personalities than these two holy men. Theodore was a child of Constantinople, Ioannikios of the Bithynian village of Marykaton; Theodore was born to a family of high-ranking officials, Ioannikios was a peasant boy who had to herd swine in his childhood; Theodore received a first-rate education and became a prolific and original writer, Ioannikios served many years as a soldier in the *tagma* of exkoubitors and remained illiterate until having been tonsured in his thirties or even forties; Theodore put on the monastic habit at the very beginning of his adult life whereas Ioannikios withdrew from the army and became a monk when he was a mature man with considerable life experience behind him; the Constantinopolitan *koinobion* of Stoudios, one of the largest monasteries of the capital, was the center of Theodore's activity in those halcyon days when he was not exiled, while Ioannikios' monastic exploits took place primarily on Mount Olympos, in such monasteries as Agauros and Antidion, in hermitages on the verge of precipices or in caves. Theodore, under his uncle's influence, joined early the Iconodulic camp, whereas Ioannikios was an Iconoclast in the predominantly Iconoclastic army and changed his creed either after a miraculous vision or due to a shock during the defeat at Markellai in 792. Theodore was the recusant leader of the Iconodules and a victim of persecutions: arrested, exiled, separated from his disciples, deprived of books, he fought the emperors and anticipated the victory. In the case

of Ioannikios, however, we do not know of any conflicts between him and the Iconoclastic authorities.

In the letter to "the hermit Ioannakes" sent in 823 Theodore praised Ioannikios and reminded him of their pleasant conversation. In another letter (ep. 490.80-81) he names Ioannikios "our spiritual father". Their relations, however, were not entirely rosy: in the *Little Katecheseis* (ed. E. Auvray, Paris 1891, ch. 38.45-49, p. 141) Theodore is very critical of Ioannikios who, he says, dwelt "in the desert and on the mountain" during the Iconoclastic persecutions when the faithful were confined and whipped.

Ioannikios died in 846,<sup>1</sup> soon after the restoration of the cult of icons. Unfortunately, his hagiographers disagree over the chronological calculations of the events of his life.<sup>2</sup> Did he die at the age of 84 or 94 or, in other words, was he born in 762 or approximately ten years earlier?<sup>3</sup> Did he turn forty-three at the time of the battle of Markellai (he is said to have served twenty-four years in the army after having enlisted at the age of nineteen) or was he then not older than thirty? Whatever the chronology of his secular years, after the battle at Markellai, he deserted the army and spent the rest of his life on Mount Olympos or in neighboring regions. During the reign of Leo V he temporarily left Bithynia, but returned to his home region after Michael II initiated the policy of relative tolerance. Probably in 821, he was invited to the convention of the leaders of the Orthodox party where he had an opportunity to meet Theodore of Stoudios. During the following period (the reigns of Michael II and Theophilos) his life is not eventful: we hear only about Ioannikios' movements from one monastery to another and about his journeys to important sites, such as Agros, the monastery founded by Theophanes the Confessor. After the restoration of icons in 843, he collaborated with the new patriarch Methodios who visited Ioannikios just before the saint's death.

It is easy to understand why Theodore acquired such a venerable position in the Iconodule tradition. Why is it, however, that Ioannikios, who was not a confessor, who fled from Leo V and led a secure life not only under the indifferent Michael II but also under the severe Theophilos, the ruler whom a biographer of Ioannikios calls "subservient to the wishes of the apostate dragon", was accorded such a remarkable place in Iconodule folklore? Ioannikios is indebted for his fame to the powerful monastic community of Mount Olympos which needed a respected figure to compete with the authority of the Stoudite and especially to the talent of his hagiographers who managed to transform the eventless life of the former soldier, illiterate peasant and wandering hermit into a saga of sanctity.

<sup>1</sup> J. PARGOIRE, Quel jour saint Joannice est-il mort?, *EO* 4, 1900/1, 75-80.

<sup>2</sup> See the chronological tables, based on the two different *Vitae* of Ioannikios, in C. MANGO, The Two Lives of St. Ioannikios and the Bulgarians, *HUKSt* 7, 1983, 395-398, 401f.

<sup>3</sup> Scholars calculate the precise date of Ioannikios' birth according to Sabas as 753/4 or 754/5; had we followed Pargoire, it should have been 752 (= 846-94). For the accuracy of Sabas' *Vita*, see MANGO, The Two Lives.

## B. Two Vitae of St. Ioannikios (BHG 935-936)

With the exception of the tenth-century revision by Symeon Metaphrastes, two "doublet" *Vitae* of Ioannikios survived: one by Sabas and another by Peter.<sup>4</sup> It is a common opinion that Peter was the first to compose the saint's biography and that Sabas imitated him. Peter claims a personal acquaintance with the saint and also refers to information supplied by Eustratios of the Agauros monastery, Ioannikios' closest companion for many years. The most important argument to support the primary origin of Peter's *Vita* is an episode about the author's visit (together with a certain Plato) to Ioannikios: he relates this episode in the first person (AASS Nov. 2/1, p. 428B), whereas Sabas, narrating the same story, says that the monk Peter came with Plato to see Ioannikios (p. 368C). Since Peter does not mention the death of the patriarch Methodios in 847, C. Mango concludes that his *Vita* was produced "within six months of Ioannikios' demise." Any dating based on an *argumentum ex silentio*, however, cannot be conclusive. Peter, for instance, ignores the emperor Theophilos, whom Sabas mentions and berates numerous times (p. 365B, 368A, 371ABC). It would, however, be unreasonable to conclude that Peter had finished his work before Theophilos ascended the throne.

There are, moreover, some elements of Peter's *Vita* which seem to exclude an early dating. Time and again Peter stresses that the memory of the miracles worked by Ioannikios survived "up to now" (p. 408B, 422C, 423A, 427BC), an expression which presupposes a certain chronological distance between the events and the narration. Only Peter (never Sabas) applies to Constantine V the epithet Kopronymos (p. 403C, 404A), unknown to the early critics of this Iconoclast emperor, and it seems plausible that Peter used literary sources to create a heroic image for Ioannikios.<sup>5</sup>

In a short preamble, Sabas says that he wrote his *Vita* at the instigation of the *hegoumenos* Joseph, and Mango assumes, with good reason, that this was "a formal commission". But why was Sabas commissioned to rewrite the *Vita* of the saint if the text by Peter was already in existence? To explain this strange fact, Mango accepts the idea expressed by E. von Dobschütz,<sup>6</sup> namely, that Sabas was required to eliminate the polemics against the Stoudites that are so conspicuous in the *Vita* by Peter. The elimination of this polemic is not the only change allegedly introduced by Sabas. Mango demonstrated that the chronological systems of the two *Vitae* differ: not only does Sabas have more dates than his counterpart, but he has a tendency to give "precise" dates in many cases where Peter is satisfied with vague indications. Sabas, continues Mango, left out certain "innocuous"

<sup>4</sup> AASS Nov. 2/1, 332-384 and 384-435; Metaphrastes' revision: PG 116, 35-92; excerpts of it in W. WEINBERGER, Beiträge zur Handschriftenkunde I, SBAW in Wien 159. 6, 1908, 80-85.

<sup>5</sup> D. SULLIVAN, Was Constantine VI 'Lassoed' at Markellai?, *GRBS* 35, 1994, 290f.

<sup>6</sup> E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, Methodios und die Studiten, *BZ* 18, 1909, 100.



paragraphs and introduced a good deal of material absent from Peter's *Vita*. If we accept the "revision" theory we may wonder why some of these deletions and additions appeared. For instance, only Sabas gives us the story about the Iconoclastic past of the hero. It is difficult to imagine that a hagiographer commissioned to correct the "impolitic" narrative would throw an additional shadow on the saint who, as we have seen, had enough problematic points in his biography.

Unquestionably, the two *Vitae* have much in common and in many cases the sequence of events as seen by the two writers is similar. The question is to what extent such similarity requires the interpretation that one of the two was revising the other, "original" text? Again we here come across a phenomenon that we have called "doublets:" the life of a saint or even a series of political events described by a pair of hagiographers or historians in similar terms. The phenomenon of "doublets" may, however, be explained differently: it is possible that one of the authors did indeed use, introducing a number of revisions, his predecessor; that they had a lost common source (a "divided dossier" in P. Speck's terminology); or, that a core of oral tradition is reflected in both "doublets". While it cannot be proved, it is possible that the Ioannikios *vita* may belong to the latter category. Sabas and Peter were novices at the time of Ioannikios; both knew Eustratios of Agauros and could draw on his memories, even his notes; they wrote soon after the hero's death, and they could have written independently, if they were following a common model. They differ in their political views (especially in their attitude toward the Stoudites) and in their literary tastes (Peter being more inclined to a rhetorical style), but they both reproduce the legend of Ioannikios as established on Mount Olympos in the mid-ninth century. And in order to perpetuate this legend both Peter and Sabas had to create the image of a holy Iconodule that remained unsullied throughout the long decades of the Iconoclastic purge. Ioannikios, it should be remembered, was a contemporary of Leo V, Michael II and Theophilos.

In the lemma of Sabas' *Vita* Ioannikios is called thaumaturge. This word, absent from Peter's *Vita*, is the clue to the legend (Peter uses the word σμειοφόρος, lit. "standard-bearer" [p. 403C, 409B], which acquired in patristic language the meaning "worker of miracles"): Ioannikios was not a victim of the Iconoclastic persecutions, but he worked miracles which had both private and public character. In the Sabas-*Vita*, wonder-working begins in the hero's childhood. At seven, Ioannikios was being sent by his parents to pasture swine; having marked them with the sign of cross, the boy left the animals to themselves, and they grazed untended yet protected from thieves and beasts of prey (p. 333C). He entered the army and subscribed, like the majority of soldiers, to the Iconoclastic "heresy". But he was saved by a miraculous appearance: while his unit was crossing the "mountains" of Olympos, an old man came and reproached Ioannikios (and only Ioannikios) for disrespect for the image of Christ. In an instant Ioannikios converted, fell at the feet of the stranger and accepted the veneration of icons (p. 337A).

Neither of these episodes is to be found in Peter's version. They may or may not be historically true, but as literary-structural devices they are justified: from the very

beginning Ioannikios enters the narrative of Sabas as an extraordinary person. He is, probably, a youth of high spiritual virtues, but the author is silent about them preferring to stress Ioannikios' physical beauties: a handsome man, he surpasses his companions in strength, beauty and height (p. 334A, cf. in Peter, p. 386C).

One of the most interesting elements of the legend is the psychological crisis Ioannikios experienced on the battlefield of Markellai. In real life Ioannikios could have been a plain and simple deserter, a coward, scared of defeat, a man who fled to save his skin —this is of no matter for the *Vita*'s artistic purposes. According to Sabas, Ioannikios fought heroically and saved a dignitary lassoed by a Bulgarian warrior, so that the young Constantine VI was impressed by the courage of the "good boy" (p. 337C: it should be recalled that, if we believe Sabas, Ioannikios had already turned forty-three). Peter, who moves directly from the birth of "the morning star and all-shining sun" to the battle of Markellai, makes Ioannikios save the emperor himself (p. 386C-387A). It is hard to imagine that the replacement of the saved emperor by a saved dignitary could be the result of later revision.<sup>7</sup>

After this courageous deed Ioannikios withdrew from service in the army. Peter offers no psychological justification for Ioannikios' action, saying only "Having observed the misfortune and defeat Ioannikios felt a deep grief and rode away in tears" (p. 387B). Sabas' version, on the other hand, is unexpectedly intricate for a medieval hagiographer: Constantine VI rewarded Ioannikios, wanted to have him as a friend and courtier, and put golden bracelets on his arms. But it was this contrast, according to Sabas, between the imperial gifts and the slaughter of Christians that provoked the deep sorrow in the hero's soul and compelled him to leave military service (p. 338AB).

Ioannikios moves to Bithynia. Sabas conveys him directly to this area: "At a distance, on his right hand side, he saw (βλέψας) the soaring Bithynian mountain that we call Olympos" (p. 338BC). In Peter's *Vita*, however, the saint's voyage is more complex: firstly, right after the battle Ioannikios rode up to "a high place" from where he perceived (lit. saw, προσβλέψας) the mountain Olympos; and here he stretched his hands in the shape of cross (σταυροειδῶς) —a gesture characteristic of Moses— and prayed to God. He then headed to Constantinople and visited various holy places. After his "pilgrimage" Ioannikios rode to his birth-place, visited his parents and received their blessing; eventually he arrived at the monastery of Agauros positioned near the Bithynian Olympos (p. 387BC). This version, closely following hagiographical stereotypes, is quite different to that of Sabas. But Sabas is more coherent: it is more likely that the fugitive soldier was seized by "divine zeal" and fled directly to the famous monastic center.

Mango offers an ingenious explanation for Ioannikios' wandering from one monastery to another: the various abbots were apprehensive about accepting a deserter.

<sup>7</sup> MANGO, *The Two Lives*, 401 n. 22, suggests, however, that Sabas toned down Peter's obvious exaggeration by substituting the emperor with an anonymous "grandee".

This ambiguous situation goes unmentioned in the *Vitae* but it gives the hagiographers (especially Sabas) a nice opportunity to introduce the motif of travels that was so popular with the medieval reader. Finally Ioannikios settled down in Lycia (p. 341C) or in Thrakesion (p. 389C), and here his activity as thaumaturge begins. His miracles were divers (later on, Peter was to say of them θαυμάτων ποικιλία [p. 410A; cf. 413C]): he overcame the forces of nature (he crosses a torrential stream), exorcised "licentious spirits" which tormented a young nun, and conquered dragons. If the first dragon, which inflicted sexual drive (πορνικοί λογισμοί) on the saint, can be interpreted metaphorically (p. 343C-344A, 410BC), the horrendous dragon killed by Ioannikios in Chelidon (p. 344C) is meant to be real. The motif of the dragon defeated by Ioannikios reappears again in both *Vitae* (e.g., Sabas, p. 354C-355A; Peter, p. 457BC, 412C); Peter twice tells of a dragon on the island of Thasios (p. 405C-406A, 414C-415A), possibly a fault arising from duplication. Dragons, according to the hagiographers, lived in rivers, but also in caves, like the saint himself, who destroyed or expelled them using an iron staff or, more often, by prayer and the sign of cross. The theme of combat with a dragon is an old, pre-Christian folklore motif,<sup>8</sup> but the Byzantine authors frequently identified it with the Old Testament snake, that is, Evil. In the Iconoclastic context the dragon became the symbol of Evil incarnated in Iconoclasm (Sabas, p. 371C), and it is noteworthy that Ioannikios conquers dragons using the cross, the favorite symbol of the Iconoclasts themselves.

Ioannikios returned to Bithynia when Leo V launched a new wave of Iconoclasm. The fact that the saint preferred to flee and not to become a confessor (in the sense of the word used by Theodore of Stoudios) troubles the hagiographers. Sabas knows that some monks criticized Ioannikios for desertion (he speaks of a certain Epiphanius who "accused and ridiculed" Ioannikios, although he is reticent concerning the substance of these accusations, p. 379C), and he hastens to explain that the flight from persecutions was not, in fact, flight: Ioannikios, he says (p. 350C), left the monastery of Trichalix not because he fled (οὐ φυγὰς), but as an apostle of piety (ἀνταπόστολος [a neologism?], perhaps from ἀνταπόστολος, "considering himself or assuming in himself the mission of an apostolos"): he built churches and expelled demons (it is probably not coincidence that here demons are consistently characterized as fugitives [δραπέται], running away from Ioannikios: p. 354A, cf. 354B, 356C).

Thus Ioannikios' flight is both excused and obscured by his wonder-working. While the core of the traditional *vita* is an agon, a confrontation of the saint and his adversary, there is no agon in the story of Ioannikios. His creed is formulated not in the presence of Iconoclastic emperors or their representatives, but in connection with the events after 843, and the fact of the matter is that this creed is not his own: in Peter's version, at least, it is borrowed from the *Antirrhetikos* I of the patriarch Nikephoros. The hagiographers were interested much more in Ioannikios' miracles than in theological subtleties.

<sup>8</sup> S. THOMPSON, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Bloomington-London 1955-58, vol. 6, 226f. (index).

Ioannikios' miracles comprise the most substantial and most original part of the *Vitae*. The miracles are depicted in the form of short stories, in which traditional healings and exorcisms are relatively infrequent. The most popular action, in fact, is prediction (usually in an enigmatic manner) of somebody's death, and this prophetic gift of Ioannikios allows the hagiographers to present his involvement in "great politics" without his being physically involved. For instance, he foresaw the death of Nikephoros I (Sabas, p. 346B; Peter, p. 391BC), the fate of the emperor Staurakios (p. 346C-347A, 391C-392B), the ascent of Leo V to the throne (p. 347AB, 392BC) and his assassination (p. 355AB, 401B), and the death of Theophilos (Sabas, p. 371C). His gift was not limited to prophesying the demise of royal personages —Ioannikios predicts the death of ordinary men and women, Iconoclasts and Orthodox alike, and the hagiographers dutifully list their names.

The motif of "agricultural" miracles is not common in the legend. On one occasion Ioannikios expelled caterpillars from the garden of the Agauros monastery (p. 361B, 421AB), and on another his prayer opened a source of water in the arid area of Chelidon (p. 410AB). He tended to work miracles of a different kind, saving a church from fire (p. 397C-398A), a worker bitten by a viper (p. 408AB), a boy sent by his parents to carry water whom demons tried to push down a precipice (p. 398C); he even liberated some men from Arab captivity and numerous prisoners of war kept in Bulgarian jails (p. 359C-360A). But often the wonders performed by Ioannikios are "personal", "introvert", and do not involve providing other people with assistance. For example, when the pseudo-hermit Gourias attempted to poison Ioannikios, the latter, after a pious vision, threw up the poison (p. 396BC; briefly in Sabas, p. 351AB); on another occasion he recovered his staff capped with an iron cross, which he had lost in a ravine (p. 402C); he waded across a torrential river securing his safe passage by making the sign of the cross (p. 409A); he opened the locked doors of the church of John the Evangelist (p. 409AB); he revealed to Eustratios the names of two shepherds whom they met by accident while walking in the mountains (p. 423BC); and he tamed wild beasts, such as an enormous bear (p. 414AB) and a huge ram (p. 345A, 390BC). His favorite "personal" trick was to make himself invisible to passers-by (p. 413AB, 413BC, 424A), and his supreme introvert miracle occurred when, during prayer, he levitated (p. 352BC; Peter adds that at this moment he was more brilliant than the sun, p. 398B). Several of these wonders were well known from ancient hagiographic collections; others were further elaborated by later hagiographers.

An important number of features are characteristic of his miracles: they are often worked by the sign of the cross and never with the help of an icon; they are very often connected with the suppression of sexual drive (e.g., p. 398C-399B, 410C-411B); the names of his "patients" are rarely given except in those cases where their death is predicted.

The purpose of the miracles is evidently ideological: to eulogize the saint from Bithynian Olympos, surpassing Constantinopolitan saints who were described by their hagiographers as politicians and vehicles of high moral standards rather than workers of wonders. There is practically no place for miracles in the *Vitae* of the patriarch Nikephoros

or Theodore of Stoudios; they did not traverse raging rivers, nor tame bears, nor levitate in the air. These miraculous features made the *Vitae* of Ioannikios extremely entertaining, and some of the stories develop into fully-fledged novelettes with details that are barely relevant to the image of the hero.

Both hagiographers (p. 378C-379C, 425B-426B) narrate the story of a man from the village of Elos introduced as a nephew of the notary Eugantres who traveled on business or trade (πραγματεία) and was taken captive by the Hagarenes, carted off to Syria and put in jail. His relatives fell at the feet of two high-ranking dignitaries who were visiting Ioannikios (unlike the man taken captive their names and offices are given: the *patrikios* and *sakellarios* Leo and the *koubikoularios* and *protovestiarios* Agapetos) and begged them to intercede with the empress Theodora on behalf of the victim so that an agent be dispatched to the infidels and the prisoner released. The two *Vitae* here differ slightly from one another: Sabas says that the relatives of the prisoner asked that a Saracen be sent in exchange, whereas Peter says that they wanted a monk from Agauros to be dispatched to negotiate the exchange. The replacement of a Saracen by an "Agaurian" in Peter's account can be explained by Peter's general tendency to stress the role of the monastery of Agauros and its *hegoumenos* Eustratios, or, alternatively, by confusion of the names "Hagarene" and "Agaurian".

At the same time Ioannikios was also solicited to intervene. While the negotiations were being conducted, Amorion fell to the Arabs (there is a noticeable shift in time or person: in 838, when Amorion was seized by the Arabs, the ruler of the country was the Iconoclast Theophilos, but the hagiographers are keen to camouflage Ioannikios' connections with the Iconoclastic court and thus replace Theophilos by the "Christ-loving and Orthodox queen") and the number of Byzantine prisoners of war increased. Ioannikios miraculously appeared to the nephew of Eugantres and his fellow prisoners and encouraged them to escape from the jail. They got up at night, the fetters fell from their legs and they found the doors of the dungeon open and the guards in a deep sleep; they passed them unnoticed and hid in a forest. The suspense increases as we are told that the Arab shepherds grazed their herds in this forest, and their dogs picked up the scent of the fugitives. The poor men were sorely afraid, but happily Ioannikios chased the dogs away and led the former prisoners through the *kleisourai*<sup>9</sup> to freedom.

The legend of Ioannikios is far removed from the numbing monotony of the *Vitae* of Nikephoros and Tarasios by Ignatios the Deacon (see below, p. 352-356). The structure of the tale is varied: the story of the saint's spiritual career is interrupted and completed by his miracles (which, unlike those of the *Miracles of St. Artemios*, are multifarious and asymmetrical), by the exposition of his creed, by his letter to the patriarch Methodios, and by his forays into political events (meetings with high ecclesiastics and secular

<sup>9</sup> Kleisoura meant, in late Roman vocabulary, the "defile". Later, it designated small territorial units located on the montaneous frontiers of the empire.

functionaries, a visit to the monastery founded by Theophanes the Confessor, predictions of the death of numerous emperors). There is no traditional agon in the legend, and the wearisome description of ascetic piety is reduced to a minimum.

The *Vitae* abound in minor characters which are usually named and ideologically marked ("Iconoclast-heretic" or "Orthodox"), but no more than this. The Iconoclastic emperors, especially Leo V and (in Sabas) Theophilos, are given numerous derogatory epithets. More interesting, however, are the images of ordinary enemies of the saint. Strangely enough they are not Iconoclasts, but fellow monks, like a certain Epiphanius of the monastery Baleou (i.e. Balaïou), Kochlia, who criticized and ridiculed Ioannikios and even wanted to strike him with his iron-handled staff. Another adversary of the saint is the evil hermit Gourias who attempted to poison Ioannikios. Peter heaps abusive language on "the dirty Stoudites" and their allies: Kakosambas (that is, Kakosabbas — "the evil Sabas"? — most probably meaning Katasambas<sup>10</sup>), the former bishop of Nikomedeia Monomachos, or rather "Theomachos", the fighter against God, and the foolish eunuch of the church of Kyzikos (p. 432B). There are many other invectives against the Stoudites which are omitted by Sabas or in which the hated Stoudites are replaced by a neutral pronoun τινές (p. 357C).

One of the minor characters is given an exceptional place in the story, not because he is portrayed in detail, but because of his role as Ioannikios' *confidante* (particularly in the Peter's *Vita*). This is Eustratios of the Agauros monastery who invariably accompanies the saint and listens as Ioannikios formulates his ideas and observations. Eustratios rarely acts in the *Vitae*, and when he does his actions are passive: thus he is said to have a nose-bleed which the physicians were unable to cure but which the saint easily healed (p. 415B). The figure of the hero's *confidante* was to find new life in the next century, especially in the brilliant Constantinopolitan *Vitae* of *Andrew the Fool* and *Basil the Younger*.

Although few of the miracles are chronologically defined, the general effect is for time to develop in linear fashion. Predictions of people's death, however, break the strict linear sequence of story-telling, and other flashbacks can be noted. By way of digression, Sabas narrates how Ioannikios climbed the mountain called Raven's Head (Korakos Kephale) and came upon two ascetics who had been dwelling there for approximately forty years (p. 340f.; cf. a shorter account in Peter, p. 389A). Many years later, Ioannikios decided to withdraw from the madding crowd to Raven's Head where, adds Sabas, two old monks had received him (p. 362C). Once again Sabas recollects the two ascetics: "as predicted by two old men on Raven's Head" (p. 379C). Why was this episode so important for Sabas? By climbing the mountain Ioannikios is identified as the new Moses, and the instructions of the two ascetics are compared to the tablets of stone (*Exod.* 31.18) handed over to Moses by God. The identification as Moses and the motif of the spiritual tablets of stone is repeated in Sabas (p.359C), whereas in Peter's version Moses and the tablets of

<sup>10</sup> On Kakosabbas/Katasambas see also below, p. 369.

stone appear prior to the story of the two ascetics (p. 385B; cf. the image of Moses leading his people from Egypt, figuratively interpreted as the life in darkness, p. 389B).

The setting for the tale's actions is only occasionally, and briefly, described, but it is always present: mountains, caves and deep ravines all form part of the discourse. The saint looks at Mount Olympos at the beginning of his spiritual career, he climbs up to the peak of Raven's Head, he dwells in caves (as do dragons), objects fall down the steep precipice and demons try to throw people down it, and torrential streams block the roads. Even in a vision there appears "a most beautiful and pleasant mountain" whose summit surpasses the heavenly vault (p. 370C). The action is placed in the concrete setting of a mountainous region.

Rhetorical figures such as anaphora, pleonasm or accumulation of synonyms are common. Some puns are trivial, such as the play on Irene's name meaning "peace": Irene gives εἰρήνη as a peaceful gift (εἰρηνοδότης, a patristic neologism applied to the Godhead, p. 335B). Others are more elegant, as, for instance, "the peace was celebrated (ἐκώμα) in villages (κῶμαι)" (p. 335B). Ioannikios' words are often characterized (especially by Peter) as enigmatic, allegorical or spiritual, that is, possessing a profound meaning concealed below the surface triviality. Similes are often conventional, as "the winged eagle" (p. 340C), sometimes more complex, as "the deer reconciled to God (θεοκατάρτιστος, a neologism?)" and in rare cases do in fact develop into a vivid picture, such as the image of the flames approaching a church like the sail of a boat filled up with the wind and encompassing the building like a vault (p. 398A).

### C. Sabas and the *Vita* of Peter of Atroa

We learn only a few facts about Sabas from his *Vita of Ioannikios*: he was a monk within the area of Ioannikios' activity and he was connected with the monastery of Antidion; he claims to have met the saint. Sabas relates in this *Vita* that the saint had a vision of the demise of St. Peter of Atroa, and adds that he has written about this vision in his *Vita of Peter* (AASS Nov. 2/1, 371A). The *Vita of Peter of Atroa* survived in two redactions<sup>11</sup> extant in manuscripts of the tenth century (Marc. gr. 583 and Glasgow BE 8.x.5). They are distinct from one another, even though both titles give the name of the same author: the monk Sabas. The Glasgow *Vita* seems to be secondary, or "retracted", as V. Laurent termed it, since it refers to the *domestikos* Benjamin as being mentioned in the *Vita* of the saint (*Vita*

<sup>11</sup> BHG 2364-2365; ed. by V. LAURENT, *La vie merveilleuse de s. Pierre d'Atroa*, Brussels 1956 [SHag 29], and ID., *La vita retractata et les miracles posthumes de saint Pierre d'Atroa*, Brussels 1958 [SHag 31].

*retr.*, par. 111.1-2), thus indicating the existence of an earlier work. Unlike the various "doublets" we have encountered (and shall encounter again), the two manuscripts of the *Vita of Peter* are not two (independent?) versions, but two redactions produced by the same author.

Peter of Atroa died in 837, and the original *Vita* seems to have been written soon after his death.<sup>12</sup> Sabas produced the retracted redaction in 858/60-865. The retracted edition is supplemented with Peter's posthumous miracles, and in the revised part of the main text Sabas put more emphasis on the problems of Iconoclasm.

Sabas was probably a Constantinopolitan by birth: he relates that he was thinking of returning from Mount Olympos to his place (τὰ ἴδια) in Constantinople (*Vie merv.*, par. 48.16). He was a monk of the monastery of St. Zacharias in which Peter served as abbot. It seems that Sabas had more direct information on Peter than on Ioannikios. At any rate he frequently appears in this *Vita* as an active participant in the story (he relates how he dined with the saint, how the saint commanded him to lay the table, how the saint healed him) or as a witness to events, and many times he refers to informants who told (διηγήσατο) him about Peter's exploits or his posthumous wonders.

The biography of Peter, as Sabas presents it, reminds one, to some extent, of that of Ioannikios. Peter (whose baptismal name was Theophylaktos) was born in 773 in a village of Elaia south of Pergamon. He thus came from a similar rustic background to Ioannikios. Unlike Ioannikios, however, he did not serve in the army, but at the age of eighteen settled on Mount Olympos where he spent his entire uneventful life. When Leo V came to power and began to persecute the Iconodules, Peter (like Ioannikios) preferred to leave Olympos (one of the major objects of Leo's hatred) and journeyed to Ephesus, Chonae and Cyprus. After a ten-month spell in Cyprus, he returned to Bithynia. Upon the death of the tyrant Leo, Michael II improved the situation (*Vie merv.*, par. 33.4-7) —here, as in the *Vita of Ioannikios*, Sabas contrasts Michael with the unswerving Iconoclasts Leo V and Theophilos. Some bishops and *hegoumenoi* (probably, the radical Iconodules) became critical of Peter (just as some members of the clergy and monks attacked Ioannikios); if we believe the hagiographer, they accused Peter of sorcery. Like Ioannikios Peter needed the sanction of Theodore of Stoudios: Theodore gave him a letter of recommendation and thus protected him from the assaults of Orthodox church leaders who finally accepted Peter, albeit against their will (*Vie merv.*, par. 38.21-22). Peter, however, is not among the known correspondents of the Stoudite, and we have no independent information about their contacts. Later on, Theophilos resumed persecutions, and again Peter displayed no open resistance: he advised the monks of his monastery not to defy the authorities but to disperse in small groups (par. 63.21-26).

<sup>12</sup> I. DUJČEV, Nov istoričeski izvor za bŭlgaro-vizantijski otnošenija prez pŭrvata polovina na IX vek, *IzvInstBŭlgIst* 14-15, 1964, 355 and in French version, À propos de la vie de saint Pierre d'Atroa, *BS* 27, 1966, 97. The article is reprinted in ID., *Medioevo bizantino-slavo* 2, Rome 1968, 533-539 and 624f.

Sabas describes the contacts of his hero with some leaders of the icon-worshippers: the patriarch Tarasios was personally involved in Peter's ordination (par. 6.10-16), Theodore of Stoudios testified to his Orthodoxy, Ioannikios predicted his death (par. 81.5-19). But despite his closeness to the hero, Sabas is unable to demonstrate Peter's role in the resistance to the Iconoclasts. Like Ioannikios, Peter is not a fighter but a thaumaturge, as the lemmata to both redactions title him.

The depiction of the miraculous is probably more marked in the *Vita of Peter* than in that of Ioannikios. While it was an old ascetic who provoked the spiritual change in Ioannikios, the "lady Theotokos" herself appeared in Peter's vision and directed him to Mount Olympos. The notary Zacharias (in the *Vita of Ioannikios* it was the nephew of a notary whom the saint redeemed from captivity) was imprisoned and put under armed guard. His wife entreated Peter to help, which he did. But this time it was not the saint who appeared in a vision to the prisoners, put the guards to sleep and chased away ferocious dogs; instead, an angel descended from heaven, opened the doors, removed the fetters, led the man by hand through the throng of guards, put him in a small boat, delivered him home and vanished (*Vie merv.*, par. 39.8-39). During the revolt of Thomas [the Slav], Peter appeared before the rebels brandishing a shining sword, chased them away from a nunnery in Lydia, and liberated the virgin nuns (par. 41.17-20). Peter not only worked numerous healings, to the extent that even pieces of his staff or his cowl could cure diseases (par. 26.76-80), but he also resurrected the monk Symeon who had been killed by a fallen tree, and went on to live another twenty years (par. 22.35-38). Another monk, Adrian by name, was less fortunate: like Symeon he lay "dead and breathless", but then opened his eyes, looked at Peter and died again having seen the saint (par. 47.20-21, 33). Even animals in the *Vita of Peter* are more active than those in the *Vita of Ioannikios*. A shepherd, we are told in a fable (par. 7.3-20), lost a goat that stood bleating unable to find her way. The *hegoumenos* Paul (Peter's predecessor) summoned a fox which regularly visited the monastery and instructed it to deliver the goat to the fold. The fox obeyed, herding the goat at night over a distance of three miles so that the following morning the shepherd found the maverick safe and sound at the gate of the fold.

The retracted *Vita* gives a long list of posthumous miracles performed at the coffin of the saint, and especially healings performed by the application of oil from the lamp at his tomb. Even animals, whole herds of them, were cured by Peter (*Vita retr.*, par. 106.6). The monk Bartholomew who had suffered from a pain in the right leg was, to begin with, treated successfully with the holy oil, but thereafter he died since he did not follow the diet prescribed by the "commandment" (par. 89). Non-healing posthumous miracles are less numerous, but we are told how Peter predicted the death of his servant Philotheos (par. 94.4), how he saved monks when the roof of the bakery crashed on them (par. 95.9-16) and, later on, the *scholarios* Constantine who was drowning in a river (par. 111). Peter also multiplied wine (par. 96) and found a lost horse (par. 110).

The *Vita* is composed of short stories which are independent, have no causal and no clearly chronological sequence. Occasionally Sabas indicates a date, for instance "It

happened in the fourth year of the reign of Nikephoros [I] and Staurakios" (*Vie merv.*, par. 11.54-55), but usually he is satisfied by saying "once" or "afterward" or "on another occasion". The core of these stories is a paradoxical event, the break with natural expectancy. Once, for example, Peter was walking with the deacon John and a priest in mountains near Hippos. It was an extremely hot midday of August, and the priest was suffering from dehydration. Peter pitied the man and said to him: "Look, there is water over there. Drink and soothe your thirst." Since the priest was from a nearby village and was aware that there was no water in this area, he refused to believe the saint. Peter bid him look again, and lo and behold! the new spring was gushing. The priest told the local people about the miracle, and they called it "The Monk's Spring" (par. 16.1-18).

One particular novelette (par. 55) is auctorial, told by Sabas about himself. "On another occasion" twelve monks came to Peter's cell, and he commanded Sabas to lay the table. Sabas had no more than some bread and a jar containing three liters of wine. To his astonishment, a single loaf for the guests turned out to be sufficient. Then Sabas poured them a round of wine, and what remained in the jar was only a cup. "Give us more!" ordered Peter, to which the disconcerted "waiter" responded that only one cup was left. But the "paragon of love" ignored earthly limitations and retorted in good faith: "The Lord Who brought us forth from non-existence, Who created us in His image and likeness and shaped the world for our purposes, Whose word transformed water into wine, will not He multiply this infinitesimal quantity for the need of His servants?" And God did multiply: Sabas poured the wine for everybody, and they still had some left over for the next day.

Stories about multiplication of food are especially popular in this *Vita*: olive oil is multiplied in the monastery of Semneion in Lydia (par. 30.7-10) and bread was multiplied by Peter's blessing (par. 49.14-16). As the monks of his monastery celebrated the saint's memorial it turned out that they were short of wine. A brother was immediately sent with two empty jars, but it so happened that the steward who had the keys to the wine cellar had left. The monk put the two jars at the door and went in search of the steward; he could not find the man but when he returned to the door he discovered the jars to be full of wine (*Vita retr.*, par. 96.1-17).

The independent episodes/novelettes break the chronological unity of the narrative into pieces, and Sabas deliberately sought to improve this chronological mosaic with flashbacks and foreshadowings: "As was written above" (*Vie merv.*, par. 5.25) or "Let us return to events" (par. 21.13). One of Peter's disciples, we are told, would later ("with the passing of time", *καιροῦ καλοῦντος*) become bishop (par. 52.11-12). Having described Peter's meeting with Ioannikios, Sabas shifts forward to Peter's death, which Ioannikios learned about in a miraculous vision, but then brings us back to the thread of the narrative with "Let us return to events" (par. 81.22-23).

As in the *Vita of Ioannikios* there is no agon in Peter's biography. Naturally, the hero is a model of spiritual virtue but what is remarkable in this work is the ambiguity surrounding his physical appearance. His countenance was not uniform but multifarious

depending on the character of the viewer: people around him who were pure in their thoughts saw him shining and brilliant, gentle and sweet, whereas to those who entertained evil thoughts he was gloomy and horrifically unpleasant (par. 74.13-18).

The setting of the story is the same as in the *Vita of Ioannikios*: mountains, precipices, forests, torrents —indicated rather than described. A monk fell into a ravine, but Peter made the sign of the cross and saved the brother (par. 46.11-13); a stream threatened to flood some houses, but Peter, lifting a cross of cedar, stopped the water (par. 76.10). The environment harbored dangers: a huge serpent drowned in a spring poisoning the water (par. 42.13-15), a monk disobeyed Peter's advice, bathed in a hot spring, and caught leprosy (par. 70.5-10). Demons, however, seem to have been less of a bother to Peter than to Ioannikios.

H. Loparev suggested that a certain Sabas, named as the author of the *Vita of Theophanes the Confessor*, was also the hagiographer who produced the *Vitae* of Ioannikios and of Peter of Atroa.<sup>13</sup> Loparev makes this claim while also observing the stylistic differences between the latter two *Vitae* and the extremely rhetorical panegyric on Theophanes by the former Sabas, who can hardly have known Theophanes personally and who characterized the saint as "Scythian" (hence Loparev's suggestion that Theophanes was of Russian origin!). Neither of these two identifications is backed up by convincing evidence.

#### D. Makarios of Pelekete

Besides the monk Sabas who authored the *Vitae* of Ioannikios and of Peter of Atroa, there is another Sabas who wrote the biography of Makarios (baptismal name Christopher) of Pelekete (d. ca. 840). V. Laurent (*Vie merv.*, p. 16f.), on stylistic grounds, considers the two Sabas to be distinct individuals,<sup>14</sup> whereas A. Ehrhard saw them as one and the same person.<sup>15</sup> While Sabas claims that he was an eyewitness to the deeds of his hero (p. 163.17-19) the *Vita* is thin in biographical data.

The *Vita of Makarios* does not resemble those of Ioannikios and Peter. To begin with, Makarios was born in Constantinople. Sabas describes his parents as "not ignoble" (p. 143.22), and later on, relates that the emperor Leo V promised to raise Makarios from obscurity to a respectful status in the palace if he joined the ranks of the Iconoclasts (p.

<sup>13</sup> H. LOPAREV, Vizantijskie žitija svjatyh VIII-IX vekov, *Viz Vrem* 18, 1911, 92-95.

<sup>14</sup> BHG 1003; ed. I. VAN DEN GHEYN, S. Macarii monasterii Pelecetis hegumeni acta graeca, *AB* 16, 1897, 142-163.

<sup>15</sup> EHRHARD, *Überlieferung* 1, 535f.

154.12). The "obscurity" was evidently relative: whereas Makarios did not belong to the highest echelons of society, his family must have held a position of some importance. Makarios was a monk and later *hegoumenos* of the Pelekete monastery in Bithynia, in the same area as Ioannikios and Peter, but unlike them he was arrested and exiled by Iconoclastic emperors. He was a staunch defender of icons and was closely associated with Theodore of Stoudios (five letters of Theodore to Makarios survived).<sup>16</sup>

The *Vita* has a conventional structure, with an agon (dispute with the emperor) placed at the center of the narrative. The agon is both preceded and followed by the description of several miracles worked by Makarios during his lifetime and after his death: healing, ending a drought and a famine, predicting his own death. Although in some cases Sabas provides us with the names of the saint's "patients" (some look far-fetched: for instance, the cure with olive oil of a monk in whose stomach a frog had nestled), the episodes are sketchy, devoid of vitality, and minor characters do not take on convincing form.

To the same "school of Mount Olympos" belonged the *Vitae of Eustratios of Agauros* and of *Constantine the Jew*, produced later than the period when Sabas and Peter were working. These discourses, both in their content and style, differ from the Constantinopolitan "political" biography represented primarily by Ignatios the Deacon and the historians of such victims of Iconoclasm as Theodore of Stoudios and Theophanes the Confessor.

#### E. Hilarion of Dalmatos

The *Vita of Hilarion*, *hegoumenos* of the Constantinopolitan monastery of Dalmatos (d. in 845/46), authored by a certain Sabas,<sup>17</sup> does not belong to the "Bithynian cycle." Hilarion was a son of an imperial courtier, lived in the capital, and as an Iconodule was persecuted by Leo V. Theodore of Stoudios praised his resistance to Leo in a letter to him (ep. 90) and mentioned Hilarion several times in missives addressed to other persons. Whereas Bithynian monks were usually hostile toward the rebellion of Thomas, Hilarion was accused of collaboration with the partisans of the rebel, and Michael II imprisoned him. He was banished by Theophilos and only Theodora released him from exile.

<sup>16</sup> FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 256\* n. 390.

<sup>17</sup> BHG 2177-2177b; see T. MATANTSEVA, La vie d'Hilarion, higoumène de Dalmatos, par Sabas, *RSBN* 30, 1993, 17-29. The text, only summarized by Matantseva, has not yet been published. Matantseva prepared the edition for *Studi e Testi*.



There are three, somewhat ill-defined, agons in the *Vita*: Hilarion suffered from the persecutions of three emperors. Descriptions of his ordeals alternate with his miracles (he made the priest Daniel find grapes in a vineyard in winter time, and he carried out various healings). The Virgin promised him her assistance, while on the other hand the Devil put him to the test by setting the city on fire; in his noble humility Hilarion, who knew the man actually culpable of fire, admitted himself to be guilty of the crime.

T. Matantseva suggested that the text now available is Sabas' revision of the original *Vita* (just as, in her view, Sabas' *Vita of Ioannikios* was a revision of Peter's original). She concludes further that the vocabulary of the text is so similar to that of the author of the *Vitae of Ioannikios* and of *Peter of Atroa* that both Sabas must "incontestably" be one and the same person —surely a hasty conclusion when Hilarion's background differs so substantially from that of Ioannikios and Peter.

## CHAPTER TEN

### IGNATIOS AND PSEUDO-IGNATIOS

#### A. Biography

Ignatios was not numbered among Byzantine saints and no hagiographical panegyric for him was ever written. Nevertheless, he enjoyed the esteem of subsequent generations, and a short entry on him is found in the *Souda* (ed. A. Adler 2, 607f.). According to this entry, Ignatios was a deacon and *skeuophylax* of St. Sophia in Constantinople and later metropolitan of Nicaea. He was a *grammatikos* (a teacher of grammar?) and wrote *Vitae* of the patriarchs Tarasios and Nikephoros, as well as funeral elegies, letters, iambics *Against Thomas the Rebel*, and many other works. Thomas was executed in 823 and Nikephoros died in 828; thus the 820s are the *terminus post quem* for Ignatios.

The designation of the author in the title of the *Vita of Nikephoros*<sup>1</sup> coincides exactly with the *Souda*, referring to Ignatios as deacon and *skeuophylax* of the Great Church (St. Sophia), whereas the lemma of the *Vita of Tarasios* defines its author as monk. Other information derives from the *Vita of Tarasios*.<sup>2</sup> It tells us about Ignatios' relationship with the patriarch: "do not blame such muck (ἐμετος, lit. vomit) as me," he exclaims, "who dared to write offhand about the summits, but take into consideration my love of you and my fidelity (πίστις)." He will never forget the benefits of Tarasios' teaching, continues Ignatios, received in the bloom of his youth, when Tarasios initiated him in versification as well as spiritual indoctrination (par. 69). The mention of various ancient poetic rhythms (including

<sup>1</sup> BHG 1335; ed. C. DE BOOR, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica*, Leipzig 1880, repr. New York 1975, 139-217.

<sup>2</sup> BHG 1698; ed. S. EFTHYMIADIS, *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios by Ignatios the Deacon*, Aldershot 1998 [Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 4], 69-168; previous ed. I. A. HEIKEL, *Ignatii diaconi Vita Tarasii archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani*, Helsinki 1891, 395-423.

hexameter) allows one to suppose that Ignatios was schooled by Tarasios in secular poetry, that is, most probably before the latter's election to the patriarchal throne in 784. If this suggestion is correct, Ignatios must have been born not later than 770.<sup>3</sup>

V. Vasil'evskij drew attention to the epilogue of the *Vita of Nikephoros* in which Ignatios asked the patriarch's forgiveness for his "defeat and downfall" which he hopes to atone for by the tears of "bitter *epitimia*" (De Boor, 215.13 and 28-29). The search for forgiveness of sins is a commonly employed motif of Byzantine *literati*, but Ignatios seems to be more specific than, say, Joseph the Hymnographer. He asks Nikephoros to save him from "the tempest of heretical waters" (p. 216.20), and asserts that it was not by his free will that he entered the den ("Itabyrion", i.e. Atabyrion, a mountain in Galilee) of the heretics (p. 216.27-28). Ignatios hopes to be granted the patriarch's gentleness (μελιχία). As Vasil'evskij suggested, the "heresy" in which Ignatios somehow participated must surely have been Iconoclasm.

Two episodes in the *Vita of Tarasios* support this interpretation. In the first place, Ignatios praises Tarasios for his mild attitude toward the Iconoclastic clergy: they were not punished for their previous wrong opinions (κακοδοξία), they received synodical and fatherly economy and were accepted with open arms like brothers and "co-hierarchs" (ed. Efthymiadis, par. 31). In the second place, Ignatios shows indulgence for the patriarch Paul, Tarasios' predecessor, under whom the Church was plunged into Iconoclastic "ugliness" and suffered from heresy and κακοδοξία (par. 10) — words we have already seen him use. On several occasions Ignatios repeats the word "heresy" with regard to Paul who signed the heretical statement of creed, who yielded to heretical faction and was besmeared with heretical dirt.

When was the *Vita of Nikephoros* written? The hagiographer is glad that Michael II has died "together with his foul tenets,"<sup>4</sup> thus making 829 a *terminus ante quem non*. I. Ševčenko even suggests that the epilogue of the *Vita* was produced after the final victory on Iconoclasm in 843. On the other hand, W. Wolska-Conus considers an earlier date, ca. 828, when Ignatios was a *skeuophylax* of St. Sophia.<sup>5</sup> It is hard to draw any definite conclusion. Since Ignatios laments, in the preamble to the text, the death of the patriarch as a recent event it is reasonable to surmise (together with Vasil'evskij) that he delivered it soon after this event. Most probably, the death of Michael II raised in some circles hopes of ending the long and painful church dispute. Thus we do not know for sure when Ignatios joined the Iconoclasts or when he repented his error. He seems not to have been close to

<sup>3</sup> Ignatios' biography was sketched by C. MANGO with the collaboration of S. EFTHYMIADIS, *The Correspondence of Ignatios the Deacon*, Dumbarton Oaks 1997, 3-18; cf. also V. VASIL'EVSKIJ, *Trudy* 3, Petrograd 1915, XC-CVIII. Cf. LIPŠIC, *Očerki*, 302-309 and a brief survey by V. LAURENT, *Catholicisme* 5, 1962, 1195f.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. DE BOOR, 209.10-11, see ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 39 n. 92.

<sup>5</sup> W. WOLSKA CONUS, 'De quibusdam Ignatiis', *TM* 4, 1970, 339, 350.

Nikephoros (at any rate, he does not emphasize his personal relations with the patriarch<sup>6</sup>), and probably he did not support Nikephoros at the Council of 815.

The chronology of his ecclesiastical career is far from clear. It does not seem likely that he was a *skeuophylax* under Tarasios, and he makes no mention at all of his service under Nikephoros. Was he rewarded with this post after his shift to the Iconoclasts? Or, perhaps, when he became metropolitan of Nicaea? Vasil'evskij, referring to the existence of two metropolitans of the first half of the ninth century (Inger and Peter, the latter a correspondent of Theodore of Stoudios, who in 816 temporarily joined the Iconoclasts, and died in 826?), asserts that Ignatios' episcopate must have been between 842 and 855. However, it is quite possible that he served in Nicaea during the period of his Iconoclastic involvement.

The *Vita of Tarasios* (d. 806) was produced long after the death of the patriarch. Unlike the prologue to the *Vita of Nikephoros*, in which Ignatios terms his work a monody (ed. De Boor, 139.13, 140.4) and puts the emphasis on the sorrow caused by the demise of the hero, the preamble to the *Vita of Tarasios* is concerned with the period that followed the death of the hero and the oblivion that menaced the great patriarch (ed. Efthymiadis, par. 2, cf. par. 65). Leo V's death and Michael II's elevation to the throne are described (par. 67), but there is no indication how long after 820 the work was compiled. Ignatios complained of his illness and old age (par. 70), and Wolska-Conus places (as did many of her predecessors) the *Vita* around 846, a date that is quite possible, although the complaint may be a mere formula since Ignatios also complains, in conventional fashion, of his lack of eloquence. In the lemma to the *Vita*, Ignatios is characterized not as deacon and *skeuophylax* but as monk, which then begs the question: When did he become a monk? Before being ordained deacon or at the end of his career? In neither lemma is Ignatios titled metropolitan of Nicaea.<sup>8</sup>

The *Souda* makes no mention of Ignatios taking on the monastic habit but it does relate that he was a *grammatikos*, a statement that gives rise to new problems. Was Ignatios a grammarian before his ecclesiastical career, immediately following his education by Tarasios? Or did he teach grammar at the end of his life when he repented his Iconoclastic connections? There is no evidence that can contribute to a possible solution to the problem; moreover, the name of Ignatios the "grammarian" which appears on some Byzantine verses only serves to complicate the task of establishing Ignatios' biography.

<sup>6</sup> R. BROWNING, Ignace le Diacre et la tragédie classique à Byzance, *REGr* 81, 1968, 404, considers Ignatios "ami intime" of Nikephoros.

<sup>7</sup> J. PAROIRE, Saints Iconophiles, *EO* 4, 1900-1901, 350-354; FATOUROS, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 1, 219\* n. 256. V. LAURENT, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin* V/1, Paris 1981, no. 391, attributes to him a seal of the first half of the ninth century.

<sup>8</sup> A seal of Ignatios metropolitan of Nicaea has survived (LAURENT, *ibid.*, no. 1713), but the editor suggests the hierarch of the same name who lived in the mid-tenth century as its owner.

Among the correspondents of Theodore of Stoudios there are three Ignatii: a bishop of Miletos, exiled by the Iconoclasts (eps. 75 and 267), a *hegoumenos* (ep. 14), and one of Theodore's favorite disciples. In a letter of 815, Theodore characterizes him as the first calligrapher and *chrysophylax* (ep. 130.13-14), a term synonymous with *skeuophylax*. Despite the surface similarity of functions, there is not sufficient reason to identify him as our Ignatios; the case is instructive, for it shows the danger of making rash identifications.

According to the *Souda*, Ignatios wrote poetry. Wolska-Conus meticulously collected scarce information about these verses. The Iconoclastic iambics of a certain Ignatios refuted by Theodore of Stoudios (see above, p. 255) were not apparently by our Ignatios. More difficult is the case of the verses by the οἰκουμενικὸς διδάσκαλος Ignatios engraved in the colonnade of Sigma constructed during the reign of the Iconoclast Theophilos (829-42) (Theoph. Cont., p. 143.10-12). The chronology of this construction coincides well with the life-time of Ignatios the Deacon. If the identification is valid, we acquire a grain of Ignatios' biography: he held an important teaching position under the Iconoclastic emperor. But is it legitimate to identify a simple *grammatikos* with the "ecumenical teacher"? And can we be sure that the verses (obviously not Iconoclastic by their character since they survived through the middle of the tenth century) were contemporary with the building of Sigma?

There is another Ignatios who can lay claim to having been *oikoumenikos didaskalos*. The *Anthologia Graeca*, I.109-121, contains a series of poems (mostly distichs) with the lemma "Ignatios magister of the *grammatikoi*". Since the first of these distichs praises the emperor Basil I and his sons Constantine and Leo for adorning the church of the Virgin, the poem had to be written ca. 870; this is too late, however, for the former student of the *asekretis* Tarasios. We have to assume that this was another poet of the same name who worked at the court of Basil I.

Other poems ascribed to an Ignatios usually bear only the bare name of the author, as for instance the *stichoi on Adam* (PG 117, 1163-1174) presenting a dialogue between Adam and Eve, which are loaded with citations from ancient tragedians. Wolska-Conus defines it as "a rare example of Byzantine religious drama"; but to bestow the term "drama"<sup>9</sup> on this brief piece is probably an exaggeration. Whatever the case, there is no way one can securely attribute the *stichoi* to this or any other Ignatios. The *Stichoi on Lazarus* of Ignatios were attributed by L. Sternbach "without a shade of doubt" to the patriarch Ignatios (d. 877),<sup>10</sup> whereas Wolska-Conus, also "sans doute", makes Ignatios the Deacon its author. It is possible that Ignatios the Deacon authored a five-line epigram comparing the biblical David with "our" Orpheus.<sup>11</sup> Tetrastichs summarizing the fables of

<sup>9</sup> "Lesedrama", in the words of P. SPECK, Ignatios Diakonos, Στίχοι εἰς τὸν Ἀδάμ, *BS* 56, 1995, 353.

<sup>10</sup> L. STERNBACH, Methodii patriarchae et Ignatii patriarchae carmina inedita, *Eos* 4, 1897, 156.

<sup>11</sup> E. FOLLIERI, Un carme giambico in onore di Davide, *SBN* 9, 1957, 106-108.

Aesop are attributed in manuscripts to Ignatios the Deacon,<sup>12</sup> and the elegy on the death of his student Paul is attributed to Ignatios the deacon and *grammatikos* (PG 11, 1173-1176). The identification here with our Ignatios is possible, even though some manuscripts name Gregory of Nazianzos as the creator of the elegy.<sup>13</sup> G. Marengi considered Ignatios the Deacon the author of a group of epigrams in *Anthologia Palatina* XV.29-31 and 39-39b.<sup>14</sup> This identification seems attractive since within this group there is an epigram on a certain Paul who died at the age of twenty-three; he could be the Paul, student of Ignatios the deacon and *grammatikos*, but the texts are trivial, and S. G. Mercati who republished the elegy expresses doubt as to whether the two Pauls are indeed one and the same person. Another Ignatian epigram in the *Anthologia Palatina* (XV.29), on his own tomb, contains a confession of sins; it may have paralleled the epilogue to the *Vita of Nikephoros* had the motif not been utterly banal.

The alphabetical acrostic addressed to a youth admonishes the writer's pupil to follow the just way of God, to devote himself to sciences, to get along with fellow students, and so on. The compiler of these trivial admonitions is defined as Ignatios, deacon of Constantinople (sic!) and *skeuophylax* of the Great Church;<sup>15</sup> probably the lemma is slightly distorted and the toponym "of Constantinople" should be attached to the "Great Church".

A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus had no doubts attributing to Ignatios the Deacon numerous kanons preserved in the *Menaia*, including a *Kanon on the patriarch Tarasios* and a *Kanon on the translation of the relics of the patriarch Nikephoros*; P. Nikitin adds to this list a *Kanon on the martyrs of Amorion*.<sup>16</sup> A. Heisenberg, however, was less sure about the identification of the hymnographer "Ignatios" or "Ignatios the Monk" as Ignatios the Deacon, and modern scholars ascribe the relevant hymns to the homonymous patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>17</sup> In any event, it is difficult to posit Ignatios the Deacon as the author of the *Kanon on the martyrs of Amorion*, unless we assume it to have been produced

<sup>12</sup> C. F. MÜLLER, *Ignatii Diaconi tetrasticha iambica*, Kiel 1886, supplemented by ID., Handschriftliches zu Ignatius Diaconus, *BZ* 1, 1892, 418-437, and 2, 1894, 516-527.

<sup>13</sup> S. G. MERCATI, Di un carme anacreontico spurio e mutilo di Gregorio Nazianzeno, *BZ* 17, 1906, 389-396, repr. in ID., *Collectanea byzantina* 1, Bari 1970, 3-10. Cf. H. M. WEHRHAHN, Dubia und Spuria bei Gregor von Nazianz, *Studia Patristica* 7, Berlin 1966 [TU 92], 341.

<sup>14</sup> G. MARENGHI, Ignazio diacono e i tetrastici giambici, *Emerita* 25, 1957, 487-492. The identification was rejected by V. L[AURENT], *BZ* 51, 1958, 163f.

<sup>15</sup> C. F. MÜLLER, Ignatii Diaconi acrostichon alphabeticum, *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 46, 1891, 320-323.

<sup>16</sup> A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, Ὁ ὑμνογράφος Ἰγνάτιος, *Ekklesiastike Aletheia* 26, 1902, 37-39, 68-70, 88-91; V. VASIL'EVSKIJ and P. NIKITIN, *Skazanija o 42 Amorijskikh mučenikah*, St. Petersburg 1905, 262-264.

<sup>17</sup> A. H[EISENBERG], *BZ* 11, 1902, 623f., cf. BECK, *Kirche*, 603; SZÖVÉRFY, *Hymnography* 2, 44. FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 272, lists two hymnographers Ignatii: the [patriarch] of Constantinople and the archimandrite of the monastery of St. Demetrios or Hierosolymite.

immediately after their martyrdom (in 845), before their prose *martyria* started to appear (cf. below, p. 371).

To sum up, it is clear that the offices (deacon, *grammatikos*, *skeuophylax*) in the lemmata of some “secular” poems evidently indicate our Ignatios, who should be distinguished from the author of the Iconoclastic iambics, the magister of *grammatikoi* (and *oikoumenikos didaskalos*) and the patriarch.<sup>18</sup> Neither the poems nor their lemmata contribute anything to the poet’s biography. We may note, however, that the title of the metropolitan of Nicaea does not appear in the lemmata to Ignatian verses.

The *Souda* lists, among other works by Ignatios, his letters. One might have expected these letters to furnish us with additional data on the life of the writer. Have these letters survived?

### B. Letters

Ed. C. MANGO with the collaboration of S. EFTHYMIADIS, *The Correspondence of Ignatios the Deacon*, Dumbarton Oaks 1997; previous ed. M. GEDEON, *Νέα βιβλιοθήκη ἐκκλησιαστικῶν συγγραφέων* I/1, Constantinople 1903, 1-64

In 1968 R. Browning stated that the letters of Ignatios “seem to have been lost.”<sup>19</sup> But already in 1903 M. Gedeon published a collection of sixty-four letters which D. Serruys and J. Pargoire identified as written by Ignatios the Deacon;<sup>20</sup> neither Pargoire nor Serruys presented any proof that the collection was by him; it was only C. Mango who set out serious arguments for Ignatios’ authorship.<sup>21</sup>

The collection is anonymous. If we leave aside Ignatios of Nikomedeia, the addressee of a letter, and Ignatios in another lemma, emended by Mango, the name of Ignatios is given only once, in a context that is far from clear. The collection consists of two distinct parts: letters 1-24 and letters 25-64. The letters of the second part were written in the 840s (among them are missives addressed to the patriarch Methodios [842-47]), whereas the first part seems to have been produced in the 820s. The earlier letters were written by a

<sup>18</sup> A. KOMINIS, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν ἱερόν ἐπίγραμμα καὶ οἱ ἐπιγραμματοποιοί*, Athens 1966, 124-126.

<sup>19</sup> BROWNING, Ignace le Diacre, 405.

<sup>20</sup> J. PARGOIRE, *Lettres inédites d’Ignace de Nicée*, *EO* 6, 1903, 375-378. D. SERRUYS’ opinion is known only from a report of a session of January 9, 1902, *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Comptes rendus*, 1903, 38-40.

<sup>21</sup> C. MANGO, *Observations on the Correspondence of Ignatius, Metropolitan of Nicaea* (first half of the ninth century), in J. DUMMER–J. IRMSCHER–K. TREU (eds.), *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Berlin 1981 [TU 125], 403-410, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its image*, London 1984, pt. XII. This view was questioned by A. KAZHDAN, *Letters of Ignatios the Deacon once more*, *JÖB* 44, 1994, 233-244.

high-ranking ecclesiastic, whereas the author of the second section was a scholar. How can this difference be explained? One solution is that the two parts were written by different persons. This is not very likely, however: among the addressees of both parts there is a certain Nikephoros, deacon and *chartophylax*. Even though 67.5 percent of letters in the later section were sent to him and in the earlier part only 12.5 percent, it would be unlikely (although not impossible) that one and the same addressee “united” two different epistolographers.

More likely is the suggestion that the two sections were created by the same man at two different stages of his career: one in the 820s when he was a member of the clergy and another in the 840s when he was busy with scholarly activity. In the 820s the epistolographer dwelt in the area of Nicaea, but the geographic area of his interests was not limited to the church of Nicaea and its suffragan bishoprics, such as Taion and Noumerika: in ep. 6 he intervenes on behalf of the bishop of Ikonion, which was the capital of the ecclesiastical province of Lycaonia and had nothing to do with the jurisdiction of Nicaea. The writer never presents himself as a metropolitan: on the contrary, he contrasts himself, “a little shepherd”, to the bishop of Gangra, “the great archbishop” (ep. 18.27-28); his position is described as mere *ἱερωσύνη*, “priesthood”, whereas bishops and metropolitans are decked in these letters with such epithets as *ἱεράρχης*, *ἀρχιερωσύνη*, *ἀρχιερατεία*.

The author is deeply concerned with the management of church property: he discusses such problems as taxation, exploitation of land, the labor of *paroikoi* and *misthioi*, transportation of grain and trade in salt.<sup>22</sup> These letters are a valuable source for the study of the Byzantine economy of the first half of the ninth century. The background of the author seems to conform more with the functions of an *oikonomos* than with those of a metropolitan. Accordingly, the circle of his correspondents, apart from the logothete of the *genikon* Democharis,<sup>23</sup> consists of officials of the second echelon, whereas the tenth-century metropolitan of Nicaea Theodore corresponded with men and women of much higher rank, such as emperors and *augustae*, eparchs and a logothete of the *dromos*.

All references to the author’s priesthood occur in the first part of the collection. What is known, however, about the status of the sender of the later letters? In ep. 39 he complains of his poverty: I do not ask, he says, for anything beyond the things necessary for everyday existence —neither abundant means, nor large estates, nor refined status; I beg only for bread, indispensable medicine for the wretched stomach. He dubs himself “a begging atticist”. A similar situation is described in ep. 56: “A sharp and bitter *praktor*”

<sup>22</sup> See A. KAZHDAN, *Ignatios the Deacon’s Letters on the Byzantine Economy*, *BS* 53, 1992, 197-201.

<sup>23</sup> On him see S. EFTHYMIADIS, *Notes on the Correspondence of Theodore the Studite*, *REB* 53, 1995, 162f. The much younger John *κατὰ τὸν Δημόχαρον*, a correspondent of Photios (ep. 49), should be distinguished from him.

threatens the writer with punishment—if he fails to pay his arrears, he will be thrown into jail until he gives up his last “quadrans” (farthings).

In the 840s the writer seems far removed from his former business concerns; rather, he was an “atticist” and *literatus*: in a letter (ep. 50) to the *asekretis* Theophanes, “a lover of the Muses,” he announces that he had compiled a booklet (βιβλιδάριον)<sup>24</sup> of proverbs, and indeed the second group of letters is littered with the word “proverb” and its derivatives (used at least fourteen times), whereas they are absent from the early missives.

A young *literatus*, in Byzantine conditions, would often find a cozy post in a provincial see, but the transformation of a high-ranking ecclesiastic into a “begging atticist” composing a booklet of proverbs suggests, rather, personal or even political disaster. It seems reasonable to assume that the author of the letters was a victim of the restoration of icon worship, deposed from the see of Nicaea and confined in a monastery.

The genuine Ignatios joined the Iconoclasts and later confessed his guilt. As for the epistolographer, he is overtly hostile toward Iconoclasm: whereas Ignatios, in the *Vita of Tarasios*, advocated tolerance toward the former Iconoclasts, the epistolographer, in ep. 30, expresses unswervingly that all those who openly condemned or secretly disapproved of the holy icon of Christ or of the revered Mother of God or of the saints should not escape but “perish together unmourned and unmarked” (*Iliad* 6.60).

The collection contains three letters addressed to the Iconodule patriarch Methodios. There is nothing in them to suggest that the sender is confined to a monastery, or is entreating the patriarch for forgiveness, or is represented as a turncoat. The topic of these letters is a Gospel book borrowed by the patriarch from the writer, which Ignatios asks to be returned. It is hard to imagine that a repentant Iconoclast, banished to a monastery, would bother the patriarch soon after 843 with such a trifling request. When Theodore of Stoudios wrote from exile he did not demand his jailers to return his books to him; he hoped his pupils would smuggle through something for him to read. On examining his correspondence, the reader would hardly doubt that Theodore had been under arrest. We saw that in ep. 56 the “atticist” was pursued by a fiscal official; he must therefore have been a free man when this letter was dispatched—a “criminal” detained in a monastery would not be liable to tax assessment.

There may be an alternative explanation for the change in Ignatios’ situation. According to the letter to the *protospatharios* and *asekretis* Leo (ep. 58), our man left the monastery. “Do you remember,” asks here the epistolographer, “that you dragged me from Olympia at the beginning of monastic seclusion?” We may assume that the writer started his monastic career long ago on the Bithynian Olympos (that is, in the vicinity of Nicaea), but Leo convinced him to quit. A reference to the author’s monastic life can be found in

<sup>24</sup> On the term see B. ATSALOS, *La terminologie du livre-manuscrit à l’époque byzantine*, Thessalonike 1971, 81-84. Atsalos refers to Theodore of Stoudios and Photios; we may add to his list of ninth-century examples Ignatios and George the Monk (I, 2.3).

ep. 33 as well, in which he writes to Joseph, the superior of the monastery of Antidion on Mount Olympos, about their “common father” (Ioannikios). Antidion was a center of Ioannikios’ activity, and the epistolographer belonged to the same milieu as the monk Sabas (see on him above, p. 336), who wrote the *Vita of Ioannikios* commissioned by *hegoumenos* Joseph, presumably identical with the correspondent of the “atticist”.

In a letter to Ignatios of Nikomedeia (ep. 49), the writer laments his sins that choke him and keep him from a monastic community (lit., apart from the holy flock and pasture). In ep. 40 he insists on his Orthodoxy: “I am right minded, and I keep to this more than to matters of opportunity [?].” He continues: “I have chosen the unexplored way—why do people have contempt for me?” For him, “right thought” meant more than location—perhaps another allusion to his escape from the monastery?

Several monks in the first half of the ninth century abandoned their monasteries. In a letter to a certain Euprepianos, Theodore of Stoudios (ep. 329.8-11) laments a move of his former disciple, who left monastic seclusion and became a *kourator* of a nunnery. It is better, says Theodore (l. 24-26), to join the heresy and eventually atone than to throw away the monastic habit and remain unrepentant. Another case mentioned by Theodore is that of a certain Prokopios who returned from the monastery to his wife and children (ep. 69.13-15); probably he later repented and even became a victim of Iconoclastic persecutions.<sup>25</sup> The author of the letter collection may have been one of those former monks who had preferred to quit ascetic life, and then devoted himself to scholarship, although this profession could hardly have fed him well.

Whoever authored the anonymous collection of letters, whether Ignatios the Deacon or a contemporary of his, the man was well-read in ancient literature. He mentions Ctesias and Hermogenes, quotes Homer and Hippocrates of Kos, and gathers proverbs. He was acquainted with rhetorical techniques and, in traditional oratorical fashion, depicted the disease of his “boy” as a dispute between two metaphorical personifications: life and death (ep. 38). He liked plays on words, some of which are effective, such as “utter dearth (ἀφορία) and poverty (ἀπορία) of season” (ep. 8), or “saltiness (ἀλυσκότητα) and sweetness (γλυσκότητα)” (ep. 26). Serruys cogently demonstrated that the author of the correspondence followed “la loi d’accent” as defined by Meyer and used stressed dactylic words at the close of clausulae. The observation is important, although “Meyer’s Law” is not observed consistently. Thus in eps. 40 and 41 the dactylic endings alternate with feminine and masculine forms. The use of dactylic ending of periods can be found in other rhetoricians of the ninth century: Theodore of Stoudios employed them in some letters (e.g., eps. 380 or 432) while in others (e.g., eps. 130 or 384) he does not adhere to this rule. Even more important than rhetorical ornamentation is the author’s sharp eye and ability to observe precious details.

<sup>25</sup> S. EFTHYMIADIS, *La vie inédite de s. Procope le Décapolite*, *AB* 108, 1990, 309.

Epistle 21 addressed to the logothete Democharis begins with a traditional expression of friendship supported by a scholarly reference to Pythagoras, before moving on to his theme; the story is not only a petition for help but a short masterful novelette written in such a way that it has to strike the imagination of the reader by the unexpectedness of the event described. "Yesterday, when the hour called already for dinner, some men crowded at the door of my dwelling; they were mad from sorrow." In this way he skillfully withholds the explanation of the cause for the men's appearance, and by so doing he increases the curiosity of the reader. He describes the men: dirty, unwashed, their heads covered with cloth in order to conceal their shaven skulls, their pained expressions. The writer says: "I asked what they wanted." But he is not yet ready to supply us with the answer. Instead he makes them show their backs scarred from beating, and their dirty hair shorn with an iron razor. Now the climax of the story is reached: the epistolographer participant in events ("actor") and the epistolographer story-teller ("auctor") merge in a simple phrase: "And straight away the explanation dawned on me."

The underlying cause is the men's felony against the treasury, and the writer entreats Democharis to forgive them and to take into consideration the fact that the small island where the offenders live has neither wood nor water and lacks all amenities. He ends on a strong personal note: I wept imagining the women [on this island] who would have toiled hard to obtain wood and water.

Despite the rhetorical framework of the letter (the prologue touching upon the motif of friendship, the epilogue focusing on the image of the ship of the soul laden with virtues, the allusion to the name of the addressee, Democharis, as τῆς χαρᾶς φερονύμφω, dactylic ending clausulae) the tale is vivid and evokes everyday reality.

### C. Two patriarchs and a single fabula

The *Vitae* of Tarasios and of Nikephoros are unquestionably genuine works of Ignatios the Deacon. In them Ignatios displays a penchant for classical allusions:<sup>26</sup> in the *Vita of Nikephoros* he mentions Xerxes and Philip of Macedonia, Pythagoras of Samos, Echetos and Phalarides, Alcinous, and other mythological and historical figures. The *Vita of Tarasios* contains fewer, but even there, besides well-known names, like Zeus, Solon and Lycurgus,

<sup>26</sup> Despite our confidence in the strong classical education of Ignatios, such classical knowledge need not necessarily always be derived "first-hand" since it could easily be gleaned from commentaries such as that of pseudo-Nonnus on the poems of Gregory of Nazianzus, a virtual handbook for a quick "classical" education. And in fact, many of the allusions in the *vitae* of Nikephoros are found in pseudo-Nonnus, who could then be a source for Ignatios. Kosmas of Jerusalem (who is dependent on pseudo-Nonnos) may be another possible source.

one finds in a single phrase the mathematicians Diophantos and Nikomachos. Ignatios is well-read in patristic authors, and imitated the panegyric by Gregory of Nazianzos in honor of Basil the Great.<sup>27</sup> Both *Vitae* are unquestionably very rhetorical ("high style") works, making broad use of rhetorical figures, artificial vocabulary (*composita*) and dactylic words at the end of clausulae.<sup>28</sup> In the texts embellishment of speech prevails over narration and description, and creates an atmosphere of utter eventlessness. It is appropriate here to examine how the fabula of the stories develops in them.

In accordance with the biographical stereotype, both *Vitae* begin with the boyhood of their heroes and emphasize the role of the mother in the saints' upbringing: Eudokia, Nikephoros' mother, saw to her son's education, ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (De Boor, 144.6), and Enkrateia, the mother of Tarasios, educated (παιδεύουσα) her son and admonished him in spiritual love. On finishing his schooling, Nikephoros became a scribe (ὕπογραφεύς) of the imperial "secrets" (μυστήρια, 142.21; cf. 144. 8), as did Tarasios also; the distinction is only in the use of the term for the emperor: κρατούντων in the case of Nikephoros, βασιλικῶν in the *Vita of Tarasios* (Efthymiadis, par. 6.9). Both saints were offered the patriarchal throne: the emperor sent to Nikephoros envoys who delivered a long "speech of invitation", and the man was struck (τυπείς) by the offer (p. 154.22-156.8); in the *Vita of Tarasios*, the emperors themselves give the "speech of invitation" that makes the hero deeply impressed (θαμβηθεὶς καὶ καταβροντηθεὶς; par. 1.1-2). Both offers require from the hero the suppression of heresy entrenched in the Church, and both heroes answer at length while accepting the proposal. The description of the heroes' elevation to the patriarchal throne follows. Even though the place of the celebration is different (the Great Church in the *Vita of Nikephoros*: 157.22, Magnaura in the *Vita of Tarasios*: par. 16.2), Ignatios stresses in both cases how large the gatherings were and presents the patriarch climbing the "summit of the throne" (τοῦ θρόνου περιωπὴν in the case of Nikephoros: 158.10-11, τὸ ὕψος τῆς ποιμαντικῆς καθέδρας in that of Tarasios: par. 17.11).

Ignatios then moves on to the characterization of their administration (preceded, in the *Vita of Tarasios*, by the praise of the saint's virtues): Tarasios takes measures against indulgence in luxury by the clergy (Efthymiadis, par. 18), Nikephoros puts an end to the cohabitation of monks and nuns (the so-called double monasteries: De Boor, 159.14-160.19). Ignatios devotes much space to praising Tarasios' care for the poor (par. 21), and Nikephoros (as mentioned a little earlier) served as director of the great poorhouse (p. 152.14-18). Both patriarchs are described as having founded monasteries in the same area: the location of the monastery of Nikephoros is defined only vaguely, being on a hill "opposite" (or "right on") the Thracian Bosphorus (p. 147.30), while Tarasios is said to

<sup>27</sup> Parallel expressions are collected by P. NIKITIN, *O nekotoryh grečeskih tekstah žitij svjatyh*, St. Petersburg 1895, 36-48.

<sup>28</sup> W. HÖRANDNER, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner*, Vienna 1981 [Wiener Byzantinistische Studien XVI], 121-124.



have moved to “the left bank” of the Bosphorus where he “planted noble trees of reason” (par. 24.6-11).

From the description of Nikephoros’ administration Ignatios moves to the patriarch’s conflict with Leo V. He likens Leo to the Foe, i.e. Devil, and strengthens this similarity with the physical image of Leo’s coarse hair. But the conflict is still ahead. To begin with, Leo promises to maintain the faultless worship. While the actual events of Tarasios’ patriarchate developed in a different way, their presentation in the *Vita* follows a similar pattern: first, Ignatios speaks of the clouds gathering over the hero’s head and of the danger of persecutions, and then about the Council of 787 which restored the worship of icons. He understands, it may be noted in parenthesis, that his “artistic time” is different from the real-time sequence: having mentioned the danger of persecutions, he hastens to add that “This took place later.” As he construed it, the outline of the patriarch’s biography required the clouds and danger right here, as deployed in the *Vita of Nikephoros*. The similarity of the two narratives is reinforced by the use of the same renderings in the description of the Council of 787 and the events on the eve of the upheaval brought about by Leo V: ὁρθοτόμος πίστις (ὁρθοτόμος is a patristic word, not registered in Liddell-Scott; it is encountered in both *Vitae*), ἀποστολικοὶ θρόνοι, ὁμοούσιος Τριάς. Disorder and Leo V’s upheaval in the *Vita of Nikephoros* are repeated in the military mutiny in the *Vita of Tarasios* with lexical parallels such as θυμολεόντων (Tarasios’ *Vita*) and χαμαιλέοντα (that of Nikephoros), δεισιδαίμονος-δεισιδαιμονία, and ἁγών.

After the description of the Council of 787 Ignatios presents Tarasios’ doctrine of images; in the *Vita of Nikephoros* the same place belongs to the “*tomos* of faultless worship”. Both patriarchs found (εὐρών) the Church in a bad state (καταστήματι), inclined to heresy, and both led it to quietude.

Rhetorical *martyrion* usually reaches its peak in an agon, a discussion between the saint and the emperor or his representative. In the *Vita of Nikephoros*, this agon, the dialogue of the patriarch with the emperor Leo V and his supporters about the problems of Iconoclasm, is disproportionately long (De Boor, 165-201). It ends with a short note on the Council of 815, Nikephoros’ demotion and persecutions, and a summary of events; next comes a triumph for the patriarch, namely Leo’s humiliation by the “Huns” (Bulgarians) and his murder. The *Vita* ends with a lengthy epilogue which we have already discussed.

While the agon in the *Vita of Nikephoros* is long it is nevertheless to the point: Leo was an Iconoclast, Nikephoros a confessor. The agon in the *Vita of Tarasios* —the patriarch’s dispute with the emperor Constantine VI over the Moechian affair (Constantine’s divorce and re-marriage)— is artificial. In saying this we do not mean the real conflict of powers (it does not matter for our purpose that the real Tarasios yielded to the pressure of the young emperor and allowed the new marriage to be celebrated), but rather the artistic conflict, the conflict as depicted in the discourse. Two moments should be underlined in this connection. Firstly, the agon is supplemented by a treatise on icons that contradicts the logic of events: Constantine VI was not an Iconoclast, and his dispute

with Tarasios is not about icons; the Iconodulic treatise is justified only by the parallelism with the *Vita of Nikephoros*. Secondly, neither in reality nor in the *Vita* was Tarasios subject to persecution: the traditional hagiographical agon is not consummated. In order to link the plot with the requirements of the genre Ignatios takes a bold move: at the beginning of the Iconodulic treatise he states that Tarasios imitated martyrs and crowned them, by his *logoi*, with the diadems of victory (par. 49); and at the end of it, he says that the saint extolled martyrs in enkomia and portrayed their exploits on panels (par. 55). While martyrdom appears in that part of the eulogy where it is supposed to appear, it is not the martyrdom of the saint but the martyrdom praised by the saint.

It is remarkable how close the two fabulae are. Out of the ocean of available data Ignatios chose, in both cases, similar elements, displayed them in a similar sequence and consciously approximated them to each other (we may hypothesize that Tarasios’ biography, written later, was assimilated to that of Nikephoros or that both *Vitae* were produced one shortly after the other). The stories are drawn in general lines: education, career, agon, martyrdom. The conflict is obvious: the good patriarch versus evil emperor, and the plot is rigidly linear. There is practically no room for digressional episodes, minor characters or description of setting. The place for these ordinary elements of story-telling is taken by the weaving of words: the *Vitae* are verbose because Ignatios is not interested in events.

Of the two *Vitae*, that of Nikephoros is more rhetorical. It is not only the higher level of the high style, the more refined vocabulary, the more consistent periods, the more antiquarian references. These elements are difficult to measure, and our tentative conclusions are inevitably subjective. But deviations from the “utter eventlessness” of the *Vita of Tarasios* are less rare than in the other piece. Only in Tarasios’ biography do we find a description of the saint’s funeral and the mention of several healings worked at his tomb.<sup>29</sup> And only in the *Vita of Tarasios* do we encounter several episodes in which some minor characters appear. For example, there is the tale of a woman accused of murder and acquitted thanks to Tarasios’ father, a righteous functionary (Efthymiadis, par. 5). In another tale, about a *spatharios* (Ignatios uses the periphrastic designation of “one who put on the imperial sword as the [sign of his] dignity”: par. 34.9-10) who was accused of embezzlement, fled to the altar of St. Sophia pursued by guards, and was protected by the patriarch, Ignatios boldly gives us a somewhat “naturalistic” account of the saint leading the fugitive away from the altar to evacuate his bowels at a latrine near the Holy Well (par. 35.7-11). The patriarch Paul, who is neither good nor bad, is an atypical minor character that would be out of place in a traditional rhetorical enkomion.

<sup>29</sup> “The *Vita of Nikephoros*,” says P. ALEXANDER, *Secular Biography at Byzantium, Speculum* 15, 1940, 204, repr. in ALEXANDER, *History*, pt. I, “does not contain a single miracle performed by the saint.”

Thus Ignatios can be seen to have applied different shades of rhetorical style: more consistent in the longer *Vita* of Nikephoros, more attenuate in the shorter of Tarasios. Could he write in a style relatively free from rhetorical embellishment?

#### D. Two more hagiographical pieces:

##### *The Vitae of Gregory of Dekapolis and George of Amastris*

Gregory of Dekapolis, a “wandering saint”, did not suffer from persecutions even though he lived through the period of the second Iconoclasm.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly the hagiographer calls him “a martyr without weals” (Makris, 136.25-26). It is usually assumed that the author wrote soon after the saint’s death (in 842 or a few years earlier) and knew him personally. This assumption is based on the statement in the *Vita* that in Constantinople Gregory “stayed with me,” namely with the author. F. Dvornik, however, interpreted it differently by relating the personal pronoun to the monk Anastasios who allegedly told this story.<sup>31</sup> In the *Vita of Tarasios*, Ignatios stated that he wrote what he saw and heard (Efthymiadis, par. 2); no such direct claim is to be found in the *Vita of Gregory*. At its end, the hagiographer asks the saint’s help to establish peace in the Church and suppress heresies (Makris, 152.17-19). It is unclear, however, whether this sentence is a conventional prayer or has a specific referent, alluding to Iconoclasm or the later Photios-Ignatian controversy.

Five manuscripts of the *Vita of Gregory of Dekapolis* name Ignatios, deacon and *skeuophylax* of the Great Church, as its author in the same manner as he is defined in the lemma to the *Vita of Nikephoros*. Other manuscripts present the *Vita* as anonymous. Various scholars, from Dvornik to I. Ševčenko and C. Mango,<sup>32</sup> have accepted Ignatios’ authorship, while W. Wolska-Conus rejected it.<sup>33</sup> The latter’s critical approach is based primarily on the linguistic difference (the *Vita of Gregory* is written in a simpler idiom), on the difference of ambiance (provinces where Gregory was traveling<sup>34</sup> instead of the capital), and on the attention given to miracles worked in the *Vita of Gregory*, whereas two other *Vitae* (particularly that of Nikephoros) show no interest in miracles.

<sup>30</sup> BHG 711; ed. G. MAKRI, *Ignatios Diakonos und die Vita des Hl. Gregorios Dekapolites*, Stuttgart-Leipzig 1997 [Byzantinisches Archiv 17], 53-153; previous ed. F. DVORNIK, *La vie de saint Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves macédoniens au IXe siècle*, Paris 1926, 45-75.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. MAKRI, *Gregorios Dekapolites*, 117 n. 53.2.

<sup>32</sup> C. MANGO, On Re-Reading the Life of St. Gregory the Decapolite, *Byzantina* 13/1, 1985, 635; cf. MAKRI, op. cit., 19 n. 87.

<sup>33</sup> WOLSKA CONUS, ‘De quibusdam Ignatiis’, 340-342, 359.

<sup>34</sup> See E. MALAMUT, *Sur la route des saints byzantins*, Paris 1993, 247f.

On the other hand, proponents of Ignatios’ authorship indicate, besides the direct evidence of the lemmata of several manuscripts, “a remarkable similarity in diction and style” (Mango’s words) between the *Vita of Gregory* and other works of Ignatios. The similarity of style and diction is limited to the use of the same isolated words in the biography of Gregory and that of Tarasios, such as θάσος, πειρασμοί or καρυνκία,<sup>35</sup> which are quite common in both ancient and medieval texts. P. Alexander<sup>36</sup> collected copious examples of parallels between, on the one hand, the *Vitae* of Nikephoros and of Tarasios, and, on the other, Leo VI’s funeral oration on his father —parallelism of sentences, not single words— but Ignatios was certainly not the author of the funeral speech delivered by Leo VI. There are no classical allusions in the *Vita of Gregory*, rather it often refers to the personages of the Old Testament. Also, the author of the *Vita* avoids references to historical events and he is not interested in patristic writings. It seems that only one passage (par. 75.1-2) echoes Gregory of Nazianzus or an intermediary source: it contains the words ἀνάλυσιν and χοροστασία in a context resembling a sentence in the *Vita of George of Amastris*.

Speeches, which occupy a substantial part of the *Vitae* of Tarasios and Nikephoros, play no role in the development of Gregory’s biography. Wolska-Conus is certainly right when she states that the vocabulary and syntax of the *Vita of Gregory* are simpler than in the two genuine discourses, even though some archaic grammatical forms, such as the dual (par. 45.1) and pluperfect (par. 46.5, 53.1, 58.3), can be found. A typical sentence in the *Vita of Gregory* runs as follows: “Having stayed with him [*kathegoumenos* Mark] for several [lit. not few] days, [Gregory] suffered and nervously deliberated whither and by which road to move” (par. 22.3-4), or “A certain man, possessed by the weakness of cold (τοῦ ψυχῆς, possibly “of soul”, τῆς ψυχῆς), by accident reclined on the mattress of the saint and was freed of the ailment” (par. 64.1). For comparison we shall take an unusually short sentence in the *Vita of Nikephoros* (p. 164.20-22) —normally they are much longer and more complex. Here Ignatios says (the translation here is as close to the original syntax as possible): “But departed with the imperial crown bound on his head, which justly underwent the final blow, since he disdained the just [principles or people].” The phrase is short, yet contains a polyptoton ἐνδίκως-ἐνδίκων, the “head” is rendered as the ancient κάρα, and instead of the simple *basileus* we come across the periphrastic “bound (δεσμούμενος) with the imperial crown”, while the verb ὤχετο, “departed” or “passed away”; evokes a foreflash, the just murder of the “tyrant”.

Even more important is the distinction between phrases of action in the *Vita of Gregory* and the sentences of contemplation in the *Vita of Nikephoros*.

<sup>35</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 37 n. 71. Certainly, there are other, rarer words in Gregory’s *Vita*, which have parallels in the patriarchal *Vitae*, for instance σκοτοδινία, vertigo (par. 49.12, cf. the *Vita of Tarasios*, par. 60). On the other hand, the *Vita of Gregory* has its particular lexical favorites, such as αἰσιος, auspicious, opportune, used no less than six times (par. 4.6, 14.2, 17.2, 52.33, 70.3, 80.5).

<sup>36</sup> As above, n. 30.

Choosing arbitrarily a passage in the *Vita of Gregory* (par. 22-23) and another in the *Vita of Nikephoros* (p. 204.7-205.5), we may observe the differences in diction rather than similarities. For example, the paragraphs in the *Vita of Gregory* comprise 48 verbs and participles, 9 adjectives and no adverbs; of these adjectives only two include an element of emotional estimation ("famous city" and "pious man") while others are "objective" designations, such as "the state treasury" or "ancient Rome", "ascetic enclosure" or "many days".

The paragraph in the *Vita of Nikephoros*, on the other hand, contains 37 verbs and participles, 10 adjectives and 4 adverbs; many adjectives are true epithets, complex and rare: *πρώταθλος*, *ἀνδροφόνος*, *ὀρθοτόμος*, *πολυσαλής*. The style of the *Vita of Gregory* is more "energetic", that of the *Vita of Nikephoros* more languid, descriptive or rhetorical. The monotony of dactylic ending clausulae is less systematic in the *Vita of Gregory* than in the biographies of the two patriarchs.<sup>37</sup>

Compositional technique also displays marked differences. The preamble comparing Gregory with biblical personages (Job, Moses, David) lacks any trace of "subjectivity". Even though Gregory was Ignatios' contemporary the author does not lament his recent death (as did Ignatios in the preface to the *Vita of Nikephoros*) nor is he concerned that the memory of the saint will fade (as stated in the *Vita of Tarasios*). The biography proper is practically non-existent: as soon as Gregory had a taste of elementary education his aim became to live in a monastery. The author stresses the asceticism of his dress and behavior, and accordingly he makes Gregory escape marriage and enter a monastery. The saint settled down in a cave and fought the demons with the help of the cross. There then follows the scene of sexual temptation, a scene impossible within the framework of the abstract rhetoric of Ignatios' patriarchal biographies. There is no place for sexual matters in the patriarchal biographies: Constantine VI's Moechian affair in the *Vita of Tarasios* is a political event, and in the *Vita of Nikephoros* the sex is no more than a metaphor, where the patriarch finds the most beautiful bride, the Church (p. 155.19), and adultery appears as an abstract opposition to chastity (p. 159.25-26). Gregory, on the other hand, begins his life as an escapee from a real marriage, and in the cave he suffers from real temptation, so real in fact that he felt physical pain in the "navel" of his belly (*Job* 40.16. The expression is quoted as well in the *Vita of Nikephoros*, p. 151.29), a common euphemism for the genitalia. The hagiographer returns to the sexual theme again, relating a story about the disciple of a hermit who was sent on an errand and on the way was approached by a woman eager to have intercourse with him. And in another story, a prostitute in Syracuse used her artificial beauty and obscene gestures to seduce sailors exhausted by the hardships of the sea. Like physical pain in the biblical "navel" the obscene gestures belong to a stylistic sphere quite different to that of Ignatios' high rhetoric.

<sup>37</sup> HÖRANDNER, *Prosarhythmus*, 127, summarizes: "Auch in der Klauselpraxis ist der Unterschied zwischen der *Vita des Gregorios von Dekapolis* und den Lebensbeschreibungen der beiden Patriarchen erheblich."

After taking the monastic habit, Gregory's biographical information stops. The hero's attitude toward the main ideological problem of the time, Iconoclasm, is vaguely touched upon: we are told that Gregory wanted to come to Constantinople in order to struggle for the truth, against the heresy of the accusers of Christians (Makris, par. 19.1-4). The same term, *χριστιανοκατήγορος*, is used in the *Vita of Nikephoros* (De Boor, 210.23), as well as in the works of Germanos and John Damaskenos. In the *Vita* we encounter an Iconoclastic bishop and an Iconoclastic *hegoumenos*, but the author is silent about Gregory's role in the dispute. The writer is so unconcerned with the facts of Gregory's biography that he omits to make any mention of the saint's relationship with Joseph the Hymnographer, in contrast with the *Vita of Joseph the Hymnographer* which dwells at length on Gregory's love for Joseph.<sup>38</sup>

There is no agon in the *Vita*, and the main body of the discourse is filled up with the hero's moral exploits (for example, he endures beating by a cudgel, and refuses to take from a fiscal official money earned by pillaging the poor) and miracles. Gregory chased away a terrifying dragon, and with the help of the cross expelled demons who had taken the form of flies and scorpions. His fearful specialty, like that of St. Ioannikios, was an ability to predict the imminent death of people whom he met, good and bad alike.

The account of the miracles worked by Gregory (supplemented by posthumous miracles positioned at the end of the *Vita*) has no linear development such as is characteristic of the patriarchal biographies: the episodes are independent, incongruous, not connected in their content to each other, unlike, say, *Miracles of St. Artemios* which have a common thematic axis. There is no logical transition from one miracle to the next; the linking clauses, such as "In the same town" (Makris, par. 38.1), "Another monk" (par. 54.1, 55.1) or "Somebody else" (par. 81.1, 82.1, 83.1) are formulaic and rare. The diversity of miracles in the *Vita of Gregory* is underscored by the geographical diversity of the setting: from his cave Gregory was called upon, "like Abraham", to start traveling, and he went from place to place without any clear topographical sequence: Ephesus, Constantinople, Aenos, Christopolis etc. Thessalonike appears twice in his journeyings, and he visited cities in the West, such as Rhegium, Rome and Syracuse. Some of his exploits and miracles are described with details that are of great value for the study of Byzantine daily life, though lacking the literary mastery that we have observed in the letter to Democharis attributed to Ignatios. One of the most interesting episodes in the *Vita of Gregory* is the story of the monk Zacharias and a woman with whom the monk litigated about "[the right of] neighborhood". The events are plain and straightforward: the saint commanded Zacharias to stop bothering the woman. Zacharias did not obey, was punished, repented, and finally the saint cured him of demonic assaults (par. 54). Plain and straightforward is also the story of the prostitute in Syracuse (par. 28-29): Gregory summoned the sailors, explained to them the impropriety of their conduct, admonished the woman to cease her

<sup>38</sup> Eu. I. TOMADAKES, *Ἰωσήφ ὁ ὑμνογράφος. Βίος καὶ ἔργον*, Athens 1971, 48.

wrongdoing, and the erstwhile brothel (πορνείον) was transformed into a pious institution (σεμνείον).

Stylistic devices in the *Vita* are trivial. The writer uses obscure prophecy so as to indicate the hero's talent for seeing that which ordinary people cannot. Thus Gregory recommends to two brothers that they take the monastic habit; when they declined to do so, pleading immaturity, the saint responded by saying that the times would require their service (στοργαία) even if this was against their will. The brothers interpreted this as the earthly enrolment, but as time went on both died (Makris, par. 46). In other cases the story-telling becomes iterative. We read about Gregory's visions (par. 10 and 12), which he reported later in a letter to the archimandrite of his monastery (par. 15.6-19). Many elements of the "objectively" described vision reappear, with slight variations, in this account. Two short miracle stories reveal another type of iteration, applied this time to different minor characters, in which the formulae used are identical: Gregory predicts the death of a monk in Thessalonike who "enclosed his body within a pillar" (par. 43.1-2), and he punishes the lascivious disciple of a hermit who "enclosed his body within a pillar" (par. 65).

We may conclude that the *Vita of Gregory of Dekapolis* differs in style from the highly rhetorical patriarchal *Vitae*, the genuine works of Ignatios the Deacon. This stylistic difference, however, is not sufficient to reject his authorship testified to by the lemmata of five manuscripts. Theodore Stoudite, as we have seen, elaborated his panegyrics in various manners, assuming the simpler hagiographic style in the *Enkomion of Arsenios*. The younger contemporary of Theodore and Ignatios, Photios wrote in his *Bibliotheca* (cod. 265, *Bibliotheca* 8, 57.12-14): "I have often come across discourses created by different authors which were similar and discourses of distinct character that were produced by one and the same writer." Doubt, of course, remains, and it is unlikely that it can ever be removed.

Even more complicated is the case of the *Vita of George of Amastris*<sup>39</sup> attributed by some scholars to Ignatios the Deacon. George, thought to have died between 802 and 807, is a contemporary of other heroes of Ignatios. Born in Amastris to a local noble family, early on he began to participate in the Church administration, and ca. 790 the patriarch Tarasios appointed him bishop of Amastris, allegedly in spite of the objections of the emperor.

The anonymous *Vita of George* survived in a single manuscript (Paris. gr. 1452) that is usually dated to the tenth century.<sup>40</sup> V. Vasil'evskij considered Ignatios the author of the *Vita*, and his view found the strong support of I. Ševčenko. On the other hand, G. Da Costa-

<sup>39</sup> BHG 668, published by V. VASIL'EVSKIJ, *Russko-vizantijskie issledovanija* 2, St. Petersburg 1893, 1-73, repr. (with a different pagination) in ID., *Trudy* 3, 1-71.

<sup>40</sup> F. HALKIN, *Manuscripts grecs de Paris. Inventaire hagiographique*, Brussels 1968 [SHag 44], 161f.

Louillet (following H. Grégoire)<sup>41</sup> and W. Wolska-Conus rejected Ignatios' authorship, while A. Markopoulos suggested a compromise solution: the *Vita* is by Ignatios with a later insertion produced under the influence of Photios.<sup>42</sup>

The argumentation of both parties is based on the same methodological principle: lexical resemblance. Supporters of the thesis of Ignatios' authorship have ingeniously collected a mass of phrases in the *Vita of George* which have parallels in the genuine (patriarchal) *Vitae* by Ignatios, while their opponents cite parallels between the *Vita of George* and a homily by Photios. Vasil'evskij himself sensibly stated that scholars tend to prove the dependence of one author on another by citing similarities of expression whose occurrence can be explained better simply by the similarity of events (lit. *sujets*) or objects described.<sup>43</sup> Vasil'evskij finds this methodological fallacy in the work of his predecessor, E. Kunik,<sup>44</sup> without noticing that his own argumentation falls in the same trap: he indicates one stylistic coincidence between the *Vita of George* and the *Vita of Tarasios* and five coincidences between the *Vita of George* and the *Vita of Nikephoros* (Ševčenko adds some more examples). Such "plagiarism", however, was a habit of Byzantine *literati*: hymnographers borrowed wholesale from others, and cases of "hagiographical imitations" are well known: the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* contains copious borrowings from Cyril of Skythopolis<sup>45</sup> and the later *Vita of Nikon the Metanoite* has many similarities with the *Vita of Luke the Younger*;<sup>46</sup> the romance of *Barlaam and Joasaph* consists of many citations from John Damaskenos, and Ignatios himself broadly used Gregory of Nazianzus. Unfortunately, lexical resemblance does not always constitute fullproof evidence on which to accept or reject the identity of authors.

At the same time, the *Vita of George* has obvious lexical and conceptual peculiarities. One of these is the provincial orientation of the text, a feature that shades the background to the story, with the action of the tale concentrated on Amastris. The term πατρίς, fatherland, is used no less than fourteen times, whereas the long *Vita of Nikephoros* uses it three times and the *Vita of Tarasios* only once.

It seems that the hagiographer lived a considerable time after his hero. Not only does he claim no personal acquaintance with the saint, but he distinguishes the generation of George's contemporaries from those who only observed his posthumous miracles (Vasil'evskij, 56.9-13). He himself lives after these miracles, since he is concerned that

<sup>41</sup> G. DA COSTA LOUILLET, Y eut-il des invasions russes dans l'Empire byzantin avant 860?, *Byzantion* 15, 1940/1, 245-248. Her view was rejected by E. LIPŠIC, O pohode Rusi na Vizantiju ranee 842 g., *Istoričeskie zapiski* 26, 1948, 312-331.

<sup>42</sup> A. MARKOPOULOS, La vie de saint George d'Amastris et Photius, *JÖB* 28, 1978, 78-82.

<sup>43</sup> VASIL'EVSKIJ, *Trudy* 3, XLIX.

<sup>44</sup> E. KUNIK, Ergänzende Bemerkungen zu den Untersuchungen über die Zeit der Abfassung des Lebens des hl. Georg von Amastris, *Izvestija Akademii nauk, Istor.-filol. otd.* 27, 1881, 338-362.

<sup>45</sup> J. GILL, The Life of Stephen the Younger by Stephen the Deacon. Debts and Loans, *OChP* 6, 1940, 114-139.

<sup>46</sup> D. SULLIVAN, The Versions of the Vita Nikonis, *DOP* 32, 1978, 161-168.

oblivion might conceal the memory of the saint's posthumous miracles (p. 61.16-62.2). Notable also is an episode narrated by George's hagiographer. In it he relates that the emperor Nikephoros I held the saint in very high regard and made George live with himself. Removing his purple imperial garb he put on the *chiton* and *tribonion*, or cloak, of the saint and slept on the floor (p. 54.1-8). The episode is remarkably similar to the account of the habits of another emperor who was also called Nikephoros, who refused to sleep in bed, preferring to lie on the floor, and who put on the cloak, *mandyas*, of the saint monk Michael Maleinos.<sup>47</sup> If this similarity is not accidental and if the author actually modeled his Nikephoros on Nikephoros II Phokas (963-69) then the *Vita* (copied at the end of the tenth century?) could not have been produced before the end of the tenth century.<sup>48</sup>

Vasil'evskij indicated (and Ševčenko further developed the idea) that the *Vita of George* shows scant interest in the cult of icons. Drawing attention to the story of George protecting Amastris from the Hagarenes with a cross in hands (p. 39.7-9), Vasil'evskij was inclined to see in the *Vita* a document typical of the period of relative religious tolerance during the reign of Michael II. Ševčenko takes the next step and interprets the text as the story of an Iconoclastic saint. The Iconoclastic interpretation of the *Vita* served to support the idea of Ignatios' authorship. It is claimed that he may have written the biography of George during his involvement in the "heretical" movement.

There are two points, however, which serve to contradict such an interpretation. Firstly, the heroes of the restoration of the cult of icons, the empress Irene and the patriarch Tarasios, are unequivocally eulogized in the *Vita*. Secondly, the author does not avoid the term "icon": he talks, for example, of "animated icons of the divine community" (p. 33.6), and says that "they impressed the icons of virtue on the soul" (p. 36.8), "they modeled clear likenesses of virtue as if copying the archetypal panel" (p. 36.6-7), and the painter imitated the prototype (p. 59.4-7). Although the icons in these expressions have sometimes a metaphorical tinge, they are more than "copies". Words such as archetype and prototype, panel (πίναξ), and likeness (χαρακτήρ), belong to the ambiance of icon painting. Especially important is the image of Moses who conquered the Amalekite holding in his hands not the cross (a typical instrument in similar scenes in the hymns of Kosmas and others) but "the icon of the greatest mystery" (p. 40.10). The lukewarm attitude to the problem of icon worship may have resulted less from Ignatios' sympathy for Iconoclasm and more from the relatively late origin of the *Vita*, written perhaps in a time when the dispute had lost its intensity.

It is impossible to prove or disprove the authorship of Ignatios. He could have been the author of the *Vita of George*, but this idea is by no means unproblematic. What is,

<sup>47</sup> Leo Diac., 63.9-13; Skyl., 280.9-11.

<sup>48</sup> Equally one might hypothesize that the story of Nikephoros II was modeled on the legend about George, but this does not seem convincing since the image of the "tempered" Nikephoros Phokas was developed in numerous and dissimilar texts.

probably, a generally accepted opinion is that stylistically the *Vita of George* stands somewhere between the *Vita of Gregory of Dekapolis* and the genuine biographies. From the use of dactylic ending clausulae to the interest in antiquity, everywhere the author seems to hold a middle position. With this observation in mind, let us examine the composition of the *Vita of George of Amastris*.

The text begins with a preamble (προοιμιάζεσθαι, in the words of the author, thus clearly defining this section of his work; p. 3.3), in which the hagiographer relates that he has been urged to write the saint's biography, has refused to do it owing to his lack of ability, but finally realized it was better to dare than to show negligence. After a short rhetorical praise of his hero, he moves to the main narrative (διήγησις). The preamble is obviously distinct from that in the *Vita of Gregory* which completely lacks a personal note and is limited to listing biblical paragons of the hero. Instead, it is closer to the introduction to the *Vita of Tarasios* that also focuses on two themes: the impropriety of remaining silent and the impossibility of adequately praising "the sea of virtues" of the late patriarch.

Similarities between the *Vitae* of George and Gregory Dekapolites (departure from the world, comparison with biblical personages, the metaphor of the lamp) do not go much beyond the hagiographical topos. The *Vita of George* is meager in data and rich in miracles. The wonders begin at the saint's birth. The writer describes how the saint's mother Megetho had been barren for a long time before conceiving, and makes plain reference to her biblical prototypes, Sarah and Anna. But the miraculous conception of the infertile Megetho is not the end of marvelous events: the town elders had a vision in which awesome men required them to show respect to the pregnant Megetho; and later, as George turned three, they saw a dragon push him into flames, but miraculously the infant remained unharmed. This is clearly the stuff of a hagiographical fairy-tale, remote from the soberness of the patriarchal biographies. Thereafter follows a description of George's education and his disdain for childish games (p. 14.6-16.7), resembling the story of Nikephoros' school years (again a hagiographical topos).

George's stay with an anonymous hermit and, later, in the cenobitic community of Bonyssa, is eventless, the story being somewhat dissolved by the laudation of the virtues for which the hero was famous. His ecclesiastical career reaches its peak when he was elected bishop of his home-town. At a similar point, Ignatios, in accordance with the intrinsic logic of the discourse, relates the administrative activity of both patriarchs. George's hagiographer, on the other hand, before coming to this theme twice violates the sequence of time: in a flashback he returns to the meeting of George with Tarasios, who served at that time as imperial *asekretis*, "as it is termed in the Italian dialect" (p. 29.8-10; the formula is reminiscent of that used in the *Vita of Nikephoros* [p. 144.9-10] rather than one employed in the *Vita of Tarasios* [par. 6]), and to the emperor's objections against the saint's election to the see. Proleptically he inserts the story about the liberation of Amastris from the supervision of the metropolitan of Gangra. Both episodes bear clear marks of their essentially digressional character. "My story (λόγος) goes astray," says the writer in

the first case (p. 32.1-2); "but this [took place] later," he notes in the second digression (p. 32.16). And then again: "I narrated this not in its sequence, not because it happened in the beginning [of his episcopate]—quite the opposite, it occurred much later" (p. 34.6-8). The digression, or the separation of the fabula from the plot is a sign of the emancipation of the story-telling from the rigid chronological sequence cherished by the annalistic approach. It is an interesting phenomenon, not typical of the patriarchal *Vitae*.

After these diversions the writer returns to the sequence of events, with the festal reception of the new bishop in Amastris and his management of ecclesiastical affairs (τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πραγμάτων κατάστασις, p. 35.16; cf. in the *Vita of Nikephoros*, p. 158.21: κατάσταση of the Church). Unlike the abstract characterization of the activity of the patriarchs, we find in the *Vita of George* several concrete episodes colored by the hero's capacity to perform miracles: George—o marvel! (p. 39.4)—repelled the Hagarenes, and, even more miraculously (p. 42.3), saved the Amastrian merchants arrested in Trebizond having first healed the governor's wife. Next comes his prediction of Nikephoros I's rise to the throne and the taming of the elements at the estuary of the Sangarios river. Not only do miracles play a decisive role in the episodes recounting his administration, but also the author uses George's miracle-working as an excuse for a theoretical excursus on the hierarchical structure of miracles: exorcism and the cure of diseases. For him these are routine acts performed by any saint, and both history (συγγραφή) and poetry provide us with abundant examples; the taming of the elements, roaring winds and stormy sea, is a less ordinary exploit (p. 55.12-56.3).

The tales that form this *Vita* are different from the miraculous episodes in the *Vita of Gregory*. They are full-fledged stories. One of these—the salvation of the merchants in Trebizond—is worth examining in more detail. The novelette has its own preamble: the miracle, says the writer, surpasses the deeds of ancient heroes, a fact that the story (λόγος) will demonstrate. Then in a simple, non-rhetorical way he makes his opening: "The merchants of this town were arrested in Trebizond being falsely accused of the state crime...; were arrested and by [the order of] the governor thrown into the state prison" (p. 42.4-8). This manner of presenting events is not that of the patriarchal biographies, although it does resemble the collective portrait of the solicitors coming to the epistolographer's home described in Ignatios' letter to Democharis: the arrested merchants changed physically, their faces grew emaciated, their beauty faded, their knees weakened, their eyes filled with tears. George then makes every effort to help them, looking for no excuse to stay at home. Neither his serious illness, nor the winter tempests, nor the length of the journey could stop him. He sailed forth, and the sea became calm; the placid waves carried him to his destination, lacking only the voice to express their desire to serve the righteous man. His arrival in Trebizond marks the commencement of a new fairy-tale comprised of the intrigues of the governor's lieutenant, the blindness of the governor's spouse, her healing by George, and, lastly, the freedom granted to the poor merchants. All these are actual events, embellished only a little with references to divine will and some sweeping moral generalizations. Once again we see that neither in the *Vita*

of Gregory nor in the patriarchal *Vitae* is there a place for such complex novelettes. The story of Tarasios' righteous father, the episode closest to this type, is only a pale shadow of the narration in the *Vita of George*.

Death is a mandatory element of almost every *Vita*, and here, probably, a major resemblance can be found with the genuine works of Ignatios, including the "gathering of emperors and hierarchs" (Vasil'evskij, 61.9) at the deathbed of the hero. But death, so crucial with respect to human existence, forms no marker in this narrative if seen as a literary work. The hagiographer describes various miracles which occurred at the saint's tomb: the severe storm flooded Amastris and did not damage the grave; the Rus' assaulted the town, demolished churches, and intended to loot his casket, but George, even though he did not appear in the flesh, frightened the barbarians and converted them to Christianity. We shall leave aside the thorny question of the historical background to this story. From the literary point of view, the episode is highly rhetorical (unlike the novelette about the merchants in Trebizond). Examples of this are to be seen in the description of the cruelty of the bloodthirsty Rus'—an "anthropological stereotype" of the barbarian—and in the play on the word "hoard" (θησαυρός), where the barbarians sought a hoard in the saint's grave, while in reality it was a hoard of a quite different kind from that which they were seeking since it contained the remains of George (p. 65.11-12). Other examples include the dialogue between the barbarian and a captive, and two four-part anaphorae following one another in quick succession (p. 68.6-8 and 9-12). None of these could occur in the brief episodes of the *Vita of Gregory*. On the other hand, the story is too detailed and too earthly to bear comparison with the narrative fabric of the *Vita of Nikephoros*.

The key compositional element of the genuine *Vitae* is the agon. Not only is the agon missing from the *Vitae* of George and of Gregory, but the figure of the anti-hero, the powerful adversary of the saint, is also absent. Both patriarchs struggled with bad emperors (Constantine VI and Leo V respectively). Neither George nor Gregory were pitted against an adequate foe: the Devil and his demons would incite here and there some minor characters against them but there is no major battlefield for the saint to strut about on. The patriarchal *Vitae* (especially that of Nikephoros) are organized around the great exploit; those of George and Gregory are fragmented into partial deeds artistically portrayed in the *Vita of George* and barely listed in the *Vita of Gregory*.

S. Efthymiadis, who has no doubts that Ignatios authored both the *Vita of Gregory* and the *Vita of George of Amastris*, nevertheless contrasts the style of the two groups. He finds that the biographies of Nikephoros and Tarasios "might be placed on the same literary level" and that the *Vitae* of Gregory and George are close to each other.<sup>49</sup>

We believe it is highly unlikely that the problem of Ignatios' authorship can ever be solved. This is the right moment, however, to suggest two possible scenarios. On the one

<sup>49</sup> S. EFTHYMIADIS, On the Hagiographical Work of Ignatius the Deacon, *JÖB* 41, 1991, 73-83.



hand, we can perceive Ignatios the Deacon, in accordance with the information of the *Souda*, as the author of the *Vitae* of Nikephoros and Tarasios, as well as some lost works. In this case, he is a true grammarian, well versed in ancient literature, of a highly rhetorical bent, and having little interest in lifelike, "naturalistic" picturing. On the other hand, we may attribute to him everything that was issued under the name of Ignatios (including liturgical hymns?), even hagiographical works that bear very little resemblance to his patriarchal biographies. In this case we are dealing with a virtual Renaissance *litteratus* working in various genres (prose and poetry, letters and *Vitae*) and mastering multifarious styles of presentation. What can be said with certainty about Ignatios the Deacon is that the *Vitae* attributed to him are couched in markedly differing literary styles: the *Vita of Nikephoros* is the most rhetorical, the *Vita of Tarasios* slightly less so, that of George of Amastris combines rhetorical digressions with vivid fairy tales, and the *Vita of Gregory of Dekapolis* is primarily an agglomeration of short stories about artistically disconnected miracles.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE STRANGE TRIUMPH OF THE ICONODULES: THE PATRIARCH METHODIOS

#### A. Biography

The patriarch Methodios marks the end of the long period of Iconoclastic disputes, for he was the Church leader who, with the support of the empress Theodora, re-introduced the veneration of icons in 843.<sup>1</sup> His life appears to have been full of contradictory moves. He concluded alliances with his former enemies and showed enmity with his former allies. He was a great politician and diplomat, but when it concerned his principles, he defied the authorities, and was punished harshly by the mildest of Iconoclasts Michael II. He was a writer, but his political activity overshadows his literary work, and unfortunately the manuscript tradition of his corpus is often confused.

A *vita* of Methodios, compiled by Gregory, archbishop of Sicily, is lost. From this text we know only a short episode related to a certain Lezix, *asekretis* in the reign of Theodora, mentioned in the *Thesaurus of Orthodox Faith* by Niketas Choniates.<sup>2</sup> If we assume that this *vita* was produced soon after Methodios' demise in 847, that is, in the second half of the ninth century (though there is no compelling evidence to support this assertion), the hagiographer could be identified as Gregory Asbestos ([R. Aubert], DHGE 21, 1481). G. Da Costa-Louillet (following F. Dvornik) affirms that this *vita*, being pro-Photian (Gregory

<sup>1</sup> Cf. now, D. AFINOGENOV, The Great Purge of 843: a Re-Examination, in O. ROSENQVIST (ed.), *Λεμύων. Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, Uppsala 1996 [Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 6], 79-81.

<sup>2</sup> PG 140, 281D-284A. On Lezix see J. ANDREADES, Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Λεξις ὁ ἀσκητικός, *Theologia* 11, 1933, 262-264, and especially J. GOUILLARD, Deux figures mal connues du second iconoclasme, *Byzantion* 31, 1961, 371-380, repr. in ID., *La vie religieuse*, pt. VI.

Asbestos was a staunch supporter of Photios), was destroyed by the Ignatians. Her hypothesis cannot be substantiated since we have no text of Gregory's *vita*.

The *Vita of Methodios* that survived<sup>3</sup> is anonymous and poor in information, lacking any trace of the hagiographer's personal contacts with his hero; probably, it was written long after 847. The author comments that several patriarchs could have produced a biography of his hero, but failed to do so (col. 1244D), and he is ashamed that the saint's exploits remain unsung (col. 1245A). At the end of the *Vita*, the hagiographer entreats Methodios to help the emperors (in the plural: can they be Romanos I and his sons?) to stop "the barbarian tribes" and to defeat them (col. 1261BC). It is difficult to guess who these barbarians were; they could be Bulgarians at the time of king Symeon.

Methodios was born to a rich family in Syracuse, probably ca. 790,<sup>4</sup> but his family moved to Constantinople where he spent the first half of his life.<sup>5</sup> He entered the monastery of Chenolakkos in which he distinguished himself as a calligrapher. He was employed in the diplomatic service (because of his Sicilian origin he must have known Latin), and it is not impossible that he participated in the negotiations with the abbot Heito, a member of the mission sent by Charlemagne in 811.<sup>6</sup> In 815 Methodios joined the camp of the Iconodules and went to Rome, possibly as an envoy of the deposed patriarch Nikephoros.<sup>7</sup> In a letter of 818 Theodore of Stoudios (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, ep. 274) approved of the flight of Methodios and his companion John of Monembasia, for he expected that in Rome they would contribute much to the support of their common goal; at that time the Stoudites and Methodios acted in alliance. In Rome Methodios worked as a copyist of Greek manuscripts as well.<sup>8</sup> He returned to Byzantium around 821, after Leo V's murder.

Michael II, Leo's successor, was relatively tolerant toward the Iconodules, but he turned out to be cruel to Methodios: according to the anonymous biographer, Methodios was whipped, thrown into prison and eventually exiled to the island of St. Andrew, where he was confined in a cell resembling a grave together with a man accused of usurpation

<sup>3</sup> BHG 1278; ed. PG 100, 1243-1262.

<sup>4</sup> On Methodios' biography see J. GOUILLARD, *La vie d'Euthyme de Sardes* († 831), *TM* 10, 1987, 11-16; cf. S. MARINO, *Considerazioni sulla personalità di Metodio I, patriarca di Costantinopoli, Culto delle immagini e crisi iconoclasta*, Palermo 1986, 117-126 and L. BERNARDINI, *Metodio I, patriarca di Costantinopoli* (843-847), *vincitore di II Iconoclasmo*, *Oriente Cristiano* 17, 1977, no. 1: 42-66, no. 2: 32-81, no. 3: 50-67, no. 4: 25-32; 18, 1978, no. 1: 33-54; 19, 1979, no. 1-2: 40-57.

<sup>5</sup> J. PARGOIRE, *Saint Méthode de Constantinople avant 821*, *EO* 6, 1903, 126-131.

<sup>6</sup> Hypothesis by H. LÖWE, *Methodius im Reichenauer Verbrüderungsbuch*, *DA* 38, 1982, 349-353.

<sup>7</sup> V. GRUMEL, *Les relations politico-religieuses entre Byzance et Rome sous le règne de Léon V l'Arménien*, *REB* 18, 1960, 19-44.

<sup>8</sup> P. CANART, *Le patriarche Méthode de Constantinople copiste à Rome*, *Palaeographica, diplomatica et archivistica* I, Rome 1979, 343-353.

(PG 100, 1248C).<sup>9</sup> The *Vita of David, Symeon and George of Lesbos* sheds some light on this paradoxical event saying that Methodios, the archdeacon of the patriarch Nikephoros, the only victim of Michael II, was punished for his clandestine flight to Rome.<sup>10</sup> It is plausible to suggest that Methodios was arrested not for his veneration of icons, but for his "western connections", even though the later tale has it that Methodios (together with Euthymios of Sardis) was banished since he refused to deny the divine icons (Skyl., 28.85-87). In any event, it was the consistent Iconoclast Theophilos who not only released Methodios after nine years of imprisonment, but made him his courtier. The saint accompanied Theophilos on a military expedition against the Arabs, either due to the emperor's respect for his wisdom or because Theophilos was apprehensive of Methodios' plotting in favor of the cult of icons (Theoph. Cont., 116.11-19). "Genesios," however, gives a less sophisticated explanation: Theophilos released Methodios because of his wisdom and ability to solve difficult problems, despite his hatred of the man (Genesios, 53.6-9).

The reconciliation with the Iconoclasts was probably temporary. The hagiographer describes Theophilos' reviling of Methodios, and J. Gouillard takes this evidence at face value, even though the description is rather vague and lacking in concrete information. Be this as it may, later, under Theodora, Methodios was elected patriarch (the candidate of the Stoudites, a John Kakosambas,<sup>11</sup> being turned down) and played the leading part in the restoration of icon worship.

As the leader of the victorious side, the Orthodox Methodios had to fight on two fronts: against the defeated Iconoclasts and against the radical Iconodules whose center was in the Constantinopolitan monastery of Stoudios. A political theme underlies the conflict with the Stoudites: Theodore of Stoudios and his associates challenged the imperial authority, whereas Methodios looked for a compromise with the imperial court.<sup>12</sup> As for the former Iconoclasts (John the Grammarian and his companions), they launched a personal attack against Methodios trying to undermine his moral prestige. They found a woman (the mother of the future *kathegoumenos* of Smyrna, Metrophanes) to accuse Methodios of raping her. The official historian certainly stresses that she was paid a

<sup>9</sup> J. PARGOIRE, *Saint Méthode et la persécution*, *EO* 6, 1903, 183-191.

<sup>10</sup> J. VAN DEN GHEYEN, *Acta graeca ss. Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii*, *AB* 18, 1899, 237.5-8.

<sup>11</sup> The name "Kakosambas" seems to be parodical. Considering the paleographic similarity of the Greek letters  $\mu$  and  $\beta$ , it would be natural to surmise that the name in fact derived from "Kakosabbas", which can be interpreted as "bad Sabas" or "bad abbas (= abbot)". J. DARROUZÈS, *Le patriarche Méthode contre les Iconoclastes et les Stoudites*, *REB* 45, 1987, 21 n. 16, is, however, inclined to connect the name with the monastery Kata Saba. Cf. E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Methodios und die Studiten*, *BZ* 18, 1909, 96f. On Kakosambas/Katasabbas see also above, p. 335.

<sup>12</sup> On the conflict with the Stoudites see DOBSCHÜTZ, *Methodius*, 41-105, V. GRUMEL, *La politique religieuse du patriarche Méthode. Iconoclastes et Studites*, *EO* 34, 1935, 385-401. New material is published by DARROUZÈS, *Le patriarche Méthode*, 15-57, and I. DOENS-Ch. HANNICK, *Das Periorismos-Dekret des Patriarchen Methodios I. gegen die Studiten Naukratios und Athanasios*, *JÖB* 22, 1973, 93-102.

substantial sum of money for her calumny (Theoph. Cont., 158.2-6). The highest functionaries intervened in the case: the *magistros* Manuel threatened the woman with his sword, and she confessed that she had been bribed; the gold she had received was found and delivered to the tribunal, but the accusers of Methodios, notes the historian, were not punished, even though they deserved it —with the patriarch's intercession the rulers forgave them (p. 160.2-4. The story is told also in Genesios, 59f.).

In the chronicles of the tenth century we find the same story embellished with a beautiful pious legend: Methodios, when he dwelt in Rome and was afflicted by sexual desire, prayed to St. Peter entreating the apostle to deliver him from unclean passions. Later, in a dream, Peter touched his private parts and made himself chaste forever. Now that he was accused of such a shameful act, Methodios invited the judges to his inner chamber, took off his garment and showed them his pudenda to make manifest that he was not able to commit the crime he was accused of. In other words, he claimed to have been castrated.

Some years after Methodios' death, Photios, probably in 861, lectured on the history of the Arian "heresy"<sup>13</sup> and, following Theodoretos (*Historia Ecclesiastica* I, 21.5-9), narrated a similar story: the Arians bribed a prostitute to accuse the pious Eustathios of Antioch of having sired a child with her. The end of Eustathios' case was, however, deplorable: despite the lack of witnesses, the judges condemned him, and the emperor (the great Constantine) banished him to Thrace. Two points are noteworthy in Photios' revision of the tale: firstly, he makes no mention of the emperor's involvement; secondly, he makes no parallel with the trial of Methodios that automatically seems to suggest itself, even though the comparison of Arianism with the events of the ninth century was the main purpose of his lectures.

Methodios wrote theological treatises and hagiographical discourses, as well as liturgical poems and epigrams on church objects.<sup>14</sup> Some of these works are devoted to the heroes of the past, such as Constantine the Great and his mother Helena.<sup>15</sup> Even though Methodios evidently left Syracuse in his boyhood, he retained an interest in the Sicilian holy patrons St. Agatha and St. Lucia.<sup>16</sup> Two hagiographical texts on Nicholas of Myra are attributed in manuscripts to the patriarch Methodios: G. Anrich considers one of them, addressed to an unknown Theodore (BHG 1352y), as genuine, whereas another text, called

<sup>13</sup> PHOTIOS, *Homilies*, ed. B. LAOURDAS, *Φωτίου ὁμιλίαι*, Thessalonike 1959 [Hellenika. Suppl. 12], no. XV, p. 142.19-143.16.

<sup>14</sup> See a survey of his works by D. STIERNON, *DSP* 10, 1982, 1108f. Cf. G. MACRIS, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 6, 1992, 580f.; BECK, *Kirche*, 496-498.

<sup>15</sup> CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm*, 99.

<sup>16</sup> E. MIONI, L'encomio de s. Agatha di Metodios patriarcha di Costantinopoli, *AB* 68, 1950, 58-93. A *Kanon on St. Lucia* bearing an acrostic with Methodios' name was published by A. KOMINIS in *AHG* 4, 1976, 279-287.

enkomion (BHG 1352z), was, according to Anrich, produced ca. 860, when Methodios was already dead; one manuscript ascribes the text to Basil of Lacedaemon.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time Methodios wrote on contemporary saints. A *Kanon on Ioannikios* contains the name of the "patriarch Methodios" in the acrostic.<sup>18</sup> Methodios was close to Ioannikios and visited the saint before the latter's death in 846; his writing the kanon was a natural step for the patriarch, who was trying to muster support in his clash with the Stoudites. The kanon is rhetorical (tautology and polyptoton are among the figures used), but nevertheless some features of the mountainous setting (l. 166-170) and of the "real Ioannikios" are revealed. For example, Methodios speaks of Ioannikios' flight (φεύγων) — not, however, the flight from persecution, but from "the darkness of life," from "the earthly strateia" to the angelic existence and service to Christ (l. 53-54, 65-71). In an enigmatic phrase, Methodios announces that Ioannikios waged war against the Devil and "with the sword of faith he struck the headless (ἀκεφάλους) enemies" (l. 90-91). Who are these "headless" enemies? Does Methodios just mean "senseless" or having no leader, or is he implying that the enemies were related to the Monophysite heresy (the word *akephaloi* still being applied to the Monophysites in the ninth century<sup>19</sup>)? In this case he may be alluding to the Iconoclasts, frequently assimilated to the Monophysites. In any event the saint's weapons against the dragons are "cross and staff" (l. 184). Ioannikios of the kanon is a paragon of Orthodoxy and of monastic asceticism (l. 148-149) but not the leader of the Iconodules.

Attributions of certain works to Methodios, by manuscripts or by scholars, are questionable. Two short poems *On the defenders of Amorion* are ascribed in a manuscript to Methodios, but the execution of the martyrs took place in 845 far from Constantinople, and it is hard to assume that the patriarch had sufficient time to write these verses. In another manuscript the otherwise unknown *protothronos* Theophanes (Theophanes of Caesarea?) is named as their author.<sup>20</sup> P. Lemerle attributed to Methodios a *Kanon on the restoration of the cult of icons* in 843, which is erroneously ascribed in the manuscripts to Theodore of Stoudios.<sup>21</sup> The poet's reticence with regard to icon worship in the *Kanon for Ioannikios* makes his authorship of the kanon *On the restoration* suspect. Methodios' pro-Iconodulic sympathies may have found clearer expression in the *Vitae* of two heroes of the

<sup>17</sup> G. ANRICH, *Hagios Nikolaos 2*, Leipzig, Berlin 1917, 277-298. Unlike G. ANRICH, ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 8f. and 33f. n. 46, suggests that Michael, "who wrote probably before 842," was not the source of Methodios but, just the opposite, used the *vita* by Methodios. The problem cannot be persuasively solved.

<sup>18</sup> Ed. A. KOMINIS in *AHG* 3, 1972, 134-145 and commentary *ibid.*, 571f.

<sup>19</sup> Nicephorus of Constantinople, *Apologetikos*, par. 21, PG 100, 588C. The passage is repeated by Peter in his *Vita of Ioannikios*, AASS Nov. II, 419C.

<sup>20</sup> Ed. V. VASIL'EVSKIĬ-P. NIKITIN, *Skazaniia o 42 amorijskikh mučenikah*, St. Petersburg 1905, 79f. and commentary, p. 262. The patriarch was not the only poet of this name: a certain Methodios the Stoudite is also known (FOLLIERI, *Initia* V/1, 293).

<sup>21</sup> LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 142.

Iconodulic resistance, Theophanes the Confessor and Euthymios of Sardis, which he most probably authored, although the manuscript tradition preserves them as anonymous. But are pro-Iconodulic tendencies really so clear in these discourses?

### B. Theophanes the Confessor again (BHG 1787z)

Theophanes was praised, immediately after his death, by his friend Theodore of Stoudios (see above, p. 215); Methodios' *Vita* was produced thereafter. In a later *Enkomion for Theophanes*, the anonymous author, while speaking about Megalo, the saint's wife, refers to the discourse (συγγραφή) of "the holy patriarch Methodios" who described her deeds (ed. De Boor 2, 8.33-35). In all likelihood, this discourse is the text (anonymous in the manuscript) published by V. Latyšev.<sup>22</sup> The *Vita* was commissioned by a certain Stephen and could have been written before Methodios' patriarchate, in the relatively calm period of his life under Theophilos. It is noteworthy that the crucial term "icon" appears in the text only in the biblical and figurative context of the creation of man in God's image and likeness (p. 18.20, 23.31 and 24.12). Devoting a paragraph to the Seventh Ecumenical Council, convened to restore the veneration of icons (p. 18f.), Methodios neglects the core of the dispute, saying only that the "sharp (he uses the neologism ἀμπίχεντος, lit. "double-goaded") heresy" lost its edge, and focuses on the humble external appearance of his hero, who recently had been notable, rich and titled, but wore rags during the council. This avoidance of the Iconodulic theme seems particularly strange in comparison with the praises of Theophanes compiled by other writers: the author of a dithyramb for the saint explicitly calls him "the martyr for the icon of Christ",<sup>23</sup> and tackles the theme of the icon in many other passages. Another biographer of Theophanes, Nikephoros, the *skeuophylax* of Blachernae, narrates how Leo V destroyed the icons of Christ, his Mother and all saints and made churches pitch dark, worse than in Egypt in the days of Moses (ed. De Boor 2, 23.8-11), and we find a similar statement in an anonymous *enkomion* (ed. De Boor 2, 10.22-24). Methodios, however, does not speak about the destruction of icons by Leo V; calling him evildoer (p. 28f.), the writer would seem to imply the emperor's assaults on the Church in general and on its hierarchs, and specifically emphasizes that Leo asked Theophanes to pray for him so that Leo would be able to annihilate the barbarians (p. 29.14-15) — probably, Methodios was thinking about his own position at the court of Theophilos.

<sup>22</sup> V. V. LATYŠEV, Mefodija patriarha Konstantinopol'skogo Žitie prep. Feofana Ispovednika, *Zapiski Akademii nauk*, VIII ser. *Istor.-filol. otd.* 13/4, 1910.

<sup>23</sup> K. KRUMBACHER, Ein Dithyrambus auf den Chronisten Theophanes, *SBAW*, 1896, no. 4, 617.7-8.

Methodios, while writing, was concerned with the cult of saints' relics (p. 34.26-27, 30-31), but not that of icons.

The *Vita* is a regular saintly biography. It begins with Theophanes' birth to the family of Isaac, the governor of the islands of the Aegean during the reign of the "tyrant" Constantine V, the death of his father and his education under the supervision of his mother Theodote, and ends with the saint's demise and the *translatio* of his relics from the island of Samothrace to his monastery of Agros. The central episode of the first part of the *Vita* is a "Christian love story" — Theophanes' betrothal and marriage to Megalo, a noble, beautiful and spiritually exalted girl. On the night after the wedding, Theophanes persuaded Megalo to preserve her chastity and eventually to take the monastic habit. This decision caused severe problems, since both the emperor Leo IV and Theophanes' father-in-law, an influential dignitary, desired the young husband to continue his secular career. Only after the death of Leo IV and the enthronement of the "peaceful" Irene, was the chaste couple able to fulfill their dream and enter monasteries.

This "love story" occupies sixteen of sixty-two chapters, according to Latyšev's subdivision, and it was exactly this part of the *Vita* that attracted the attention of the anonymous encomiast of Theophanes. It is followed by the saint's activity as a builder of monastic communities and as a thaumaturge. The text ends with a traditional agon, that is, the conflict of the hero with the emperor Leo V, including the disputation with the magician John [the Grammarian], and the saint's exile and passing away. Even in this context the theme of icon worship is not raised: we are only told that Leo V wanted Theophanes to succumb to his will.

Miracles are infrequent in the biographical part of the *Vita* and are not connected specifically with the spiritual power of the hero. The old ascetic Gregory predicts the imminent departure of Leo IV and the martyrdom of Theophanes; when Theophanes and his companions, roaming in an arid area, had nothing to quench their thirst, unexpectedly a spring gushed forth near Theophanes; by the next morning it did not even trickle. Miracles are concentrated in a separate section, introduced by the scene of the saint's fight with the "cheating demons", after which "grace began to crown him with the signs endowed upon [him]" (p. 20.2-3). In line with good hagiographical tradition, these wonders worked by Theophanes form a series of episodes: we find here multiplication of bread, discovering a gold coin in an evidently empty box, calming tempestuous seas, miraculous catching of fish, taming an angry cow, prohibiting frogs from croaking. Some of these miracles are stereotyped, some more or less unique; regular healings (the most popular of wonders) do not hold a prominent place among Theophanes' miraculous deeds. The theme of wonders reappears at the end of the *Vita*, after the description of the demise of the saint, and this time healings of people and animals acquire a greater role.

Miraculous stories in the text do not have the vividness and richness of detail typical of Sabas' *Vitae* of Ioannikios and Peter of Atroa. Probably, the most remarkable novelette presented by Methodios is "secular", free of any supernatural element. A peasant who

lived near the mountain of Sigriane decided to sell his land. The news became known, since, as Methodios comments, there is a legal custom (ἐννομώτατον γνῶρισμα) of first and foremost encouraging (προτρέπεισθαι) neighbors to acquire [any land for sale] (p. 17.4-6).<sup>24</sup> Theophanes wanted to buy the holding, but he did not have the financial means, and his closest relatives refused to lend him money, afraid that he would not be able to repay it. The monks, however, went around as suppliants and collected the necessary sum. The story is terse: no names are given and not a single detail irrelevant to the main pattern of events is allowed to enter the account.

This indifference to detail is offset by the high rhetoric of presentation. The pun on the name of Irene (peace) is more than common in Byzantine texts, but it surely reaches its peak in the paragraph on the empress Irene in which Methodios repeats the noun εἰρήνη and related words no less than seventy-three times. The “peace” is, by metonymy, a living person: it dances, breathes, produces unguent (μυροδοτεῖ, a new word, used also by Theophanes himself, p. 439.30), adorns, listens, examines, multiplies, blooms and bears fruit. At this point Methodios breaks the monotony of the anaphora, and restructures his “peace”-period. Peace becomes an object: everyone exercises, loves and cares about peace. Then the third section starts, when Methodios lists all the social groups and institutions that benefit from peace: archons, the poor, strangers, the sick, captives, merchants. In this last part the structure of kola becomes more complicated: while at the beginning of the anaphora, a kolon consisted of a noun and verb (as “the peace dances”), here it becomes tripartite (subject, predicate and direct object as “peace makes the illiterate wise” or “peace extends markets”), or even more complex, such as “the peace multiplies victuals and opens hoards and brings friends to friends”. The final note is set by the theme of reprisal, where peace destroys the insolent, humiliates the unjust and wipes away the lawless. The period is perhaps long and tedious for modern taste, though it is artfully built. And interestingly enough, in this eulogy of Irene’s achievements Methodios did not assign any place to the abolition of Iconoclasm, unless it is masked by a vague statement: “The Christians cherished domestic and international peace more than any other tribe, and [thus] the war of the Judaiphiles was over” (p. 14.2-3).

<sup>24</sup> On this episode see A. ALEXAKIS, A Ninth-Century Attestation on the Neighbors’ Right of Pre-Emption in Byzantine Bithynia, *Erytheia* 16, 1995, 75-79 with an Addendum, *Erytheia* 17, 1996, 41-42.

### C. Methodios and Euthymios of Sardis (BHG 2145)

The *Vita of Euthymios of Sardis*<sup>25</sup> is preserved anonymously. J. Gouillard demonstrated, however, that Methodios could safely be considered the author of this discourse.<sup>26</sup> The main (and probably decisive) argument is the writer’s narration of Euthymios’ banishment to the island of St. Andrew near Akritas, “where the author was confined” (p. 43.297-98), and we know that this was precisely the place to where Michael II exiled Methodios. Euthymios’ Life was produced before the triumph of Orthodoxy: “Now,” says Methodios, “that I am writing this [text], there is still night and the morning star has not appeared” (p. 31.131-32). The *Vita of Euthymios* has a number of common features with the *Vita of Theophanes*. The texts are extremely rhetorical, with an evident tendency to wordplay: Theophanes was endowed with an “exceeding substantiality (περιουσιότης [neologism?] οὐσιότητος)” (Latyšev, p. 22.13), whereas Euthymios, named after cheerfulness (εὐθυμία), was the hierarch of eagerness (προθυμία) in the time of despondency (ἀθυμία) (Gouillard, p. 21.1-2). In both *vitae* Methodios frequently uses periphrastic language, such as when describing death: he says that Christ snatched the archfather (i.e. patriarch), the holy man named after victory (i.e. Nikephoros) from the cell that everybody (?) illuminated (κατεφώτιζεν) to the supershining (ὑπέρφωτον) palace in the heavens (Gouillard, p. 39.239-41), while Theophanes is said to have flown out of the prison of his flesh and to have found rest in the heavenly light (Latyšev, p. 32.2-3). But neither of these rhetorical and periphrastic features could be said to characterize Methodios’ style. Finally, dactylic endings of periods are typical of the *vitae*, but this phenomenon can be observed in other authors as well.

Since the editions are accompanied by indices of words we may carry out a statistical analysis of their vocabularies. The index to the *Vita of Theophanes* contains 3,121 words, and that to the *Vita of Euthymios* 1,216. This drastic inequality results not only from the texts’ difference in length, but also from the different principles upon which the indices are based: the index to the *Vita of Euthymios* includes some proper names (listed separately in Latyšev’s edition), but it omits prepositions, particles, conjunctions and even some recurrent verbs which Latyšev accepted in his index. Thus to make the indices more or less compatible we have to diminish, say by fifteen percent, the number of words calculated for the *Vita of Theophanes*. For the purposes of the analysis let us accept that the *Vita of Theophanes* uses approximately 2,600 and the *Vita of Euthymios* 1,200 signal words (not modifiers). “Common” signal words, that is, those employed in both *vitae*, are 330. Again, the figure is imprecise, since it is difficult to define what is a “common” word: we did not

<sup>25</sup> Ed. J. GOUILLARD, Le vie d’Euthyme de Sardes (†831), *TM* 10, 1987, 1-89, with an index of Greek words by D. PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, 90-101.

<sup>26</sup> J. GOUILLARD, Une œuvre inédite du patriarche Méthode: la vie d’Euthyme de Sardes, *BZ* 53, 1960, 36-46, repr. in ID., *La vie religieuse*, pt. IX.

assume as such words of the same root if they appear as verbs in one text and nouns in another, but we did assume as common the adverbs and adjectives derived from the same radical. Basing our calculation on this premise, we may conclude that a quarter of the words (modifiers being omitted) in the *Vita of Euthymios* are "common" with the vocabulary of the *Vita of Theophanes*. If we move from bare figures to the character of the common vocabulary, it turns out that the similarity is not that striking: the most "common" words are common in another sense—they bear no individual particularity (like *χείρ*, *βασιλεύς*, *φωνή* and many others) and would appear in any text, hagiographical or not. Only a few "common" words, such as *μαγόμεντις* or *ἡλικίωσις*, can be considered as rare and typical of Methodios. On the other hand, some items of the vocabulary of the *Euthymios-vita* coincide with those used by other authors: thus it shares words and expressions with Ignatios' *Vita of the patriarch Nikephoros* as well (e.g. *μέχρις αἵματος*, *ἀπαράλόγιστος*, *ἄνλος*). A methodology for the study of the "common vocabulary" of Byzantine literary texts has not yet been elaborated, and it will take some time before we shall be able to use this tool for the identification of authors. We may state that a quarter of the words of the *Vita of Euthymios* are repeated in the *Vita of Theophanes*—but we do not know yet whether this is much or little, whether it is enough to see in such an amount a mark of the identity of the hagiographers.

Even though Methodios' authorship of both texts is more than probable, the *Vita of Euthymios* possesses some stylistic peculiarities which distinguish it from the *Vita of Theophanes*. First of all, the author's individuality is sharply highlighted in the former discourse: not only does Methodios describe his confinement on the island of St. Andrew, he relates that he himself witnessed Michael I's retirement from the throne (p. 31.124) and attended the convention of bishops and *hegoumenoi* summoned by Leo V to investigate the case of Euthymios (p. 35.172). Moreover, Methodios inserts in his tale purely personal information conveying that at the time of the Council of 787 he had not yet been born and that his mother was still a young girl (p. 23.41); he even recollects that the saint knew him in his boyhood and carried him in his arms (p. 87.963).

Another peculiarity of the *Vita of Euthymios* is its composition. The discourse consists of four parts, of which only the first is the story of the saint's life; it is accompanied by a theological tract on the incorruptibility of the flesh after death (p. 53-59) which temporarily gives place to the story proper, namely, the description of the funeral, with a beautifully conceived image where Euthymios is wept for by a downpour of rain instead of the tears of relatives (p. 63.604-606). The third section is a dissertation on the icon, mostly devoted to the exegesis of biblical passages concerning images (p. 67-77), from which Methodios proceeds to contemporary persecutions of icon-worshippers, stressing, however, not arrests and tortures (as we might have expected), but vicious mockery during drunken banquets, horse races, babbling and stammering [announcements] (*διαλαλητικαῖς ἐντραυλήσεσιν*, a neologism?) (p. 77.829-830).

The text ends with the description of several posthumous miracles worked by Euthymios and his appearances in visions. The miracles (primarily healings) are fewer than

in the *Vita of Theophanes*, their description is amorphous, and they are separated from the main story. Miracles appear to be of little interest to the author: at the very beginning Methodios praises his hero, who was loved by people of every walk of life, dignitaries and priests, the poor and the victims of injustice, supplementing this list by women suffering from hemorrhage and infertility (p. 25.53-55). The women sick from hemorrhage and those unable to conceive are traditional objects of saints' cures; here, however, they appear without the context of wonder-working, in the unusual function of merely liking the hero. Such a formulation may imply a certain degree of disregard, on the part of Methodios, for the conventional focal element of the hagiographical discourse.

The *Vita of Euthymios* is not a traditional story of a saint, although it contains some elements of traditional biography, primarily his exiles. Strangely the emphasis is put on the "secular" moments of the saint's life: his mission to Syria where he negotiated peace with the "king of the Persians and Arabs" (p. 23.44-46); his alleged involvement in the revolt of Bardanos Tourkos in 803, and subsequent punishment in the form of exile to the island of Pantellaria (p. 25.67-72); and particularly the betrothal that Euthymios flouted by taking the monastic habit (p. 25.62-65). While relating this episode (whose morality is questionable), Methodios was anxious to emphasize the propriety of the hero's actions: he did not deceive the gullible girl and returned the virgin to Christ. The episode parallels the wedding of Theophanes and Megalo (when the choice of chastity was a mutually agreed move), but it is told briefly and without the vividness of Theophanes' experience. It is noteworthy that Methodios, who himself had problem[s] with a female, was so attentive to non-consummated marriages.

The most effective scene in the *Vita* is not a miracle, but a political event witnessed (at least in part) by Methodios: Euthymios' exile to the island of St. Andrew. The hagiographer evokes many details: Joseph of Thessalonike says farewell to Euthymios; Konstantinakios, imperial deacon, brings Euthymios to the place of his confinement on Saturday evening during a terrible downpour; for a while the saint remains in isolation, then on Monday he is thrown into the cell where he was to remain with a fellow-prisoner. Breaking off the narrative Methodios exclaims: "Let another man in another time describe (lit. narrate, *διηγῆσασθαι*) the unbearably cramped conditions of our cell" (p. 43.311-312); he plays with the abstract opposition of gross (*παμμέγιστον*) crampedness and a tiny (*ἐν ἄκρῳ σμικρότητι*) cell: it could not accommodate (*χωρεῖν*) one more man, he says hyperbolically, since it did not even have a place (*χωρὸν*) for a word (p. 45.315-316). Even Konstantinakios was astounded by the smallness of the place, dark, dirty and teeming with flies, reptiles and other frightful creatures. Methodios describes how prisoners were glad to have a bishop in their confinement, how Euthymios celebrated communion, how they went to dinner. This scene full of life is concluded with the arrival of functionaries from Constantinople (they are titled *logothete*, *kanikleios* and *manglabites*) who started torturing the saint. With this we reach the point of hagiographical legend.



#### D. *Vita of Nicholas of Myra (or how to write a vita)*

One of the many *vitae* devoted to Nicholas of Myra was the work of Methodios, who is titled in the lemma "priest and *hegoumenos*";<sup>27</sup> this suggests it was written before his election to the patriarchate. Just as the *Vita of Theophanes* was commissioned by a certain Stephen, the *Vita of Nicholas* was compiled at the request of an unidentifiable Theodore whom the author apostrophizes in the prologue. The text "contains no references to images, let alone Iconoclasm."<sup>28</sup> It includes substantial rhetorical elements, such as an elaborate anaphora at the very end, containing sixteen analogous kola and reminding us of the "peace"-anaphora in the *Vita of Theophanes*. Methodios' *Vita of Nicholas* has a "doublet", the so-called *Vita* "per Michaelēm" (BHG 1348), from which it differs not in content (it is practically indistinguishable), but in its prologue and epilogue which give some idea of how a Byzantine hagiographer conceived his work.

Addressing Theodore, Methodios states that the patron wanted to commission an enkomion of the saint. His desire, however, is not so much to eulogize the saint but to "give a history" (or a detailed narration, ἀνιστορήσαι) of the saint's great exploits (Anrich I, 140.6-11 and II, 546.7-13). In other words, Methodios distinguishes between a "historical tale" and a simple panegyric. Since his discourse consists of a series of miracles traditionally ascribed to St. Nicholas, we may guess that "the hagiographical history" was an exhaustive narrative of events and miracles, whereas by enkomion Methodios understood a straightforward rhetorical laudation of the saint. Methodios sought a compromise: "I would like to entwine history and enkomion," he says (Anrich I, 140.12 and II, 546.13). And in fact he begins with a panegyric, piling up metaphors which define the hero through objects connected with fragrance (receptacle of myrrh, flower and twig, lily, rose) and light (lamp, charcoal [or ruby?], wick) (Anrich I, 141.1-4 and II, 546.25-29, 547.4-8). Then Methodios proceeds to the historical part, beginning with the saint's birthplace, the village of Patara, and his lineage (Anrich I, 142.26 and 32 and II, 547.16-17, 548.17, 548.25), stressing that Nicholas was born to noble and wealthy parents (Anrich I, 143.8 and II, 549.4-5). Even earlier, in the preface, Methodios insisted that it was necessary to indicate the lineage, the city (of birth) and the way of life (ἐπιτήδευμα, perhaps simply "profession"?) of the saint, as well as his conduct from infancy on (Anrich I, 140.16-17 and II, 546.16-18). He pursues this recipe much more in the *Vita of Theophanes* than in the panegyric-history of Nicholas, but he expressly rejects such an approach in the *Vita of Euthymios*: "I have no intention", he proclaims, "of presenting (ἱστορήσαι) the life [of the

<sup>27</sup> BHG 1347-1364. The dossier on Nicholas was collected and published by G. ANRICH, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1913-1917. The two versions of Methodios' text *ibid.*, I, 140-150 and II, 546-556.

<sup>28</sup> ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology*, pt. V, 17.

hero] systematically and in detail," and he continues polemically and parodically, "Euthymios was born, as is everybody, from some parents and, as with everybody, he was fed while an infant and educated while a child; this is a regular occurrence" (Gouillard, p. 21.13-15). He goes on: "we shall omit the lineage and birth of Euthymios as well as his growth to adulthood, because we do not know this and because it is of no avail to anybody" (p. 23.21-23).

Let us consider the logic here: did Methodios, whom Euthymios held in his arms, who was locked in the same cell with the saint, truly know nothing about the earlier years of his protagonist? The refusal to narrate the events of Euthymios' earthly life before his election to the episcopate of Sardis is best accounted for not by lack of knowledge, but by a judicious artistic approach: Methodios states that it suffices to relate the final events of the hero's life (p. 23.31-33). This approach contrasts with the principle formulated in the prologue to the *Vita of Nicholas*: in the search for novelty, Methodios shakes off the old vestments of the hagiographical tale.

Methodios was a rhetorical hagiographer. In at least one point his rhetoric is of a different kind to that of Ignatios' in the latter's purportedly genuine biographies: Methodios abundantly drew his images and comparisons from the Old and New Testament, but consistently avoided references to the treasures of Hellenic civilization.<sup>29</sup>

In the epilogue to the *Vita of Nicholas*, Methodios discusses the compositional organization of his discourse, defining with precision which episodes comprise the beginning, the middle and the end of the story (Anrich I, 149.12-15 and II, 555.22-31), and pointing out the significance of the deeds described. Nicholas, he says, openly pounced upon arrogance and particularly the crimes of the uncontrollable emperor, and he humiliated the *archons* in order to save from eternal and premature death their souls and those condemned to execution. Contemporaries of Leo V and Theophilos were able to read between the lines of this diatribe. They might recall that Methodios, unlike St. Nicholas, remained quiet during the "evil" reign of Theophilos. Perhaps his attitude had been tempered somewhat by his nine-year imprisonment in a cramped cell. Whatever the case, it was his tolerance that helped him to win the patriarchate over the candidate backed by the radical Stoudites.

<sup>29</sup> N. WILSON, *An Anthology of Byzantine Prose*, Berlin-New York 1971, 35-39, who published three paragraphs from Methodios' *Vita of Theophanes*, indicated in the commentary several rare classical words used there, including λυμνοχαρῶν from *Batrachomyomachia* 12.212. These words are most probably gleaned from lexika rather than from reading of texts and they do not in themselves demonstrate a knowledge of ancient tradition.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE MONASTIC REVIVAL OF LITERATURE (ca. 775-850)

A cursory glance is enough for one to see a quantitative difference between the literary heritage of the Dark Century and that of the period we call the "Monastic Revival". The number of texts and authors from the latter epoch is substantially larger. We have endeavored to "minimize" this difference by collecting everything produced during the Dark Century that merits being called "literature", whereas we were much less thorough in collecting the remnants of the literary production of the Monastic Revival. Moreover, in the first part of the volume we included some works (the *Romance of Barlaam*, for instance) which may have been written later, in the ninth century. We included works such as the legend of Constantine the Great, the existence of which, let alone the time of creation, is a matter for speculation. We should not forget that the first period (650-775) is almost twice as long as the second period (775-850) and that at least two of the leading writers of the Dark Century, John Damaskenos and Kosmas the Melode, worked outside Byzantine territory proper. The "quantitative" difference between the two periods was in fact more "qualitative" than appears in our presentation: we chose to play devil's advocate against our own view by reducing to some degree the image of the literary barrenness of the Dark Century. Now we are in a position to state that, at least in respect of quantity, the end of the eighth and especially the beginning of the ninth centuries saw a revival of literary productivity.

It is very important to draw methodologically correct lines between different periods of cultural development. If the eighth century is considered as an entity characterized by cultural poverty, the last part of the same century does not fit so neatly into this pattern; likewise, if one ignores the change that occurred around 775 and the difference that marks off the preceding from the following period, one can envisage a flourishing cultural environment throughout the entire century of Iconoclasm.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For instance, U. CRISCUOLO, Iconoclasmo e letteratura, in *Il Concilio Niceno II (787) e il culto delle immagini*, Sicania 1994, 191-219. Another way to "rehabilitate" the Dark Century is to assume that Iconoclastic literature was annihilated by the Orthodox persecutors.

One phenomenon in particular seems to have been connected with this literary revival: the changes in book manufacturing.<sup>2</sup> First, a new material was introduced: paper that came from China via Central Asia to the Arab world of the Mediterranean. The oldest Greek book written on paper is a patristic *florilegium*, codex Vaticanus gr. 2200, usually dated ca. 800.<sup>3</sup> Another change in book manufacturing was the introduction of minuscule.<sup>4</sup> While much has been written on this subject neither the date nor the place nor even the purpose of this innovation can be considered as fully clarified. The first precisely dated minuscule manuscript is the Gospel book from the St. Petersburg Saltykov-Šchedrin collection 219, the so-called Porfirij Uspenskij's Gospel, copied in 835, but it is highly likely that the invention of the new script took place some decades earlier. It has been suggested that minuscule was a product of the Stoudios monastery, or of the Bithynian monastic milieu, or appeared in the area of Jerusalem-Damascus, and it is a common opinion that the shortage of writing materials brought about the transition to minuscule. Whenever and wherever the change started, we should not overestimate the scale of the transformation: as C. Mango stressed, in the period 750-850 books were very scarce and extremely expensive.<sup>5</sup>

N. Wilson has emphasized that among the books copied in the ninth century works of science (as the term was understood in the early Middle Ages) were especially prominent.<sup>6</sup> The revival of science made possible the emergence of such a figure as Leo the Mathematician (or Philosopher), a relative of the Iconoclastic patriarch John the Grammarian, and himself archbishop of Thessalonike in the last years of the Iconoclastic emperor Theophilus.<sup>7</sup> Leo owned a collection of scientific books and became famous by inventing the so-called optic telegraph which was capable of informing Constantinople

<sup>2</sup> N. WILSON, *Scholars in Byzantium*, Baltimore 1983, 63-68.

<sup>3</sup> L. PERRIA, Il Vat. gr. 2200. Note codicologiche e paleografiche, *RSBN* 20-21, 1983/4, 25-68.

<sup>4</sup> See first of all C. MANGO, L'origine de la minuscule, *La paléographie grecque et byzantine*, Paris 1977, 175-180. Cf. C. M. MAZZUCCHI, Minuscole greche corsive e librerie, *Aegyptus* 57, 1977, 166-189; E. FOLIERI, Tommaso di Damasco e l'antica minuscola libraria greca, *Accad. Naz. Lincei, Cl. sc. mor., stor. e filol. Rendiconti*, s. VIII 29, 1974, 145-163; L. PERRIA, Una minuscola libraria del sec. IX, *RSBN* 26, 1989, 117-137; I. HUTTER, Scriptoria in Bithynia, in C. MANGO-G. DAGRON (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, Aldershot 1995 [Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Publications 3], 380f.

<sup>5</sup> C. MANGO, The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750-850, *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*, Washington 1975, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. VII, 43.

<sup>6</sup> WILSON, *Scholars*, 85-88.

<sup>7</sup> LEMERLE, *Humanisme*, 148-176. Cf. C. MANGO, The Legend of Leo the Wise, *ZRVI* 6, 1960, repr. in ID., *Byzantium and its Image*, pt. XI, 91-93 and B. HEMMENDINGER, *Étude sur l'histoire du texte de Thucydide*, Paris 1955, 35-39, as well as a partial characterization ("a progressive figure") by E. LIPIČ, Vizantijskij učenij Lev Matematik, *VizVrem* 2, 1949, 106-149 and EAD., *Očerki*, 339-357. A more recent article by V. KATSAROS, Leo the Mathematician, his Literary Presence in Byzantium during the 9th Century, *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian Times*, eds. P. BUTZER-O. LOHRMANN, Basel 1993, 383-398, received a very critical appraisal by P. SCHREINER, *BZ* 86/7, 1993-4, 291.

about Arab incursions along the eastern frontier.<sup>8</sup> Leo was active as a writer as well. From his literary heritage very few works survived: a *Sermon on the feast of the Annunciation*,<sup>9</sup> a didactic poem about Job,<sup>10</sup> and several epigrams.<sup>11</sup> As an author he has often been confused with two other Leos, both "Philosophers", Leo VI the Wise and Leo Choirosphaktes. We know less about the activity and the dates of grammarians such as Theognostos,<sup>12</sup> John Charax<sup>13</sup> and George Choiroboskos,<sup>14</sup> who were at least acquainted with ancient works on grammar. John of Sardis, a little known hagiographer, and correspondent of Theodore of Stoudios, published a commentary on Hermogenes and Aphthonios<sup>15</sup> that evidently reflects a growing interest in the theory of rhetoric. What is significant, however, is that the change was not limited merely to an increase in literary production: besides writing more than during the Dark Century, the intellectuals of the first half of the ninth century also wrote to some extent differently.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup> V. ASCHOFF, Über den byzantinischen Feuerelegraphen und Leon den Mathematiker, *Deutsches Museum. Abhandlungen und Berichte* 48,1, Munich 1980, 1-28 and P. PATTENDEN, The Byzantine Early Warning System, *Byzantion* 53, 1983, 258-299.

<sup>9</sup> V. LAURENT, Une homélie inédite de l'archevêque de Thessalonique Léon le Philosophe sur l'Annonciation (25 mars 842), Vatican 1964 [ST 232], 281-302.

<sup>10</sup> L. G. WESTERINK, Leo the Philosopher: Job and other Poems, *Illinois Classical Studies* 11, 1986, 193-222.

<sup>11</sup> B. BALDWIN, The Epigrams of Leo the Philosopher, *BMGS* 14, 1990, 1-17.

<sup>12</sup> The main monograph on him: K. ALPERS, *Theognostos, Περὶ ὁρθογῶντας. Überlieferung, Quellen und Text der Kanones 1-84*, Hamburg 1964; see corrections and additions A. KAMBYLIS, *Theognostea, Glotta* 49, 1971, 46-65. Cf. also W. BÜHLER, Eine Theognosthandschrift aus der Zeit um 1000 auf Patmos, *JÖB* 22, 1973, 49-91. K. ALPERS, Xerxes und Artaxerxes, *Byzantion* 39, 1969, 5-12, analyzes Theognostos' revision of the ancient anecdote of Artaxerxes and a peasant.

<sup>13</sup> L. COHN, *RE* 3, 1899, 2123f., places him in the sixth century; WILSON, *Scholars*, 68f., in the context of the ninth century.

<sup>14</sup> Choiroboskos has to have lived after John of Damascus (W. BÜHLER - Ch. THEODORIDIS, Johannes von Damaskos terminus post quem für Choiroboskos, *BZ* 69, 1976, 397-401) and Clement (Ch. THEODORIDIS, Der Hymnograph Klemens terminus post quem für Choiroboskos, *BZ* 73, 1980, 341-345); C. MANGO, The Collapse of St. Sophia, Psellus and the Etymologicum Genuinum, *Gonimos. Studies presented to L. G. Westerink*, Buffalo NY 1988, 173, prefers "the second half of the ninth century if not later."

<sup>15</sup> HUNGER, *Lit* I, 82f. Cf. on him S. EFTHYMIADIS, John of Sardis and the Metaphrasis of the passio of St. Nikephoros the Martyr (BHG 1334), *RSBN* 28, 1991, 23-44.

<sup>16</sup> On the cultural revival of the eighth and early ninth centuries see W. TREADGOLD, The Revival of Byzantine Learning and the Revival of the Byzantine State, *The American Historical Journal* 84, 1979, 1251-1266.

### A. Genre

The most popular genres of the Dark Century can be described as the "three Hs": hymnography, homiletics and hagiography. Hymnography continued to flourish in the first half of the ninth century,<sup>17</sup> represented by such great names as Clement, Joseph and Theophanes. A number of changes, however, can be seen to have occurred in the "status" of hymnography in comparison with the Dark Century. First of all, the outstanding poets of the eighth century (Andrew, Germanos, Damaskenos and Kosmas) were unquestionably the leading authors of their time and, with the exception of Kosmas, were active in other genres as well. Hymnographers of the ninth century were poets *par excellence*, if not exclusively, and their role in, and influence on, society, together with their contribution to the development of Byzantine literature, does not bear comparison with that of Theophanes the Confessor, Theodore of Stoudios, Ignatios the Deacon or Methodios. And the position of hymnography within the overall literary output of Theodore, Ignatios and Methodios was not prominent—at any rate from the point of view of a modern reader. Secondly, the creative period in the history of the kanon was finished: in the works of Clement and his junior (?) contemporaries the kanon acquired an almost inflexible, "final" form, and their successors, although numerous, only copied and imitated the established models.

Homiletics seems to have lost the dominant position it held during the Dark Century. The versatile Theodore of Stoudios left several sermons on ecclesiastical feasts, including those on the Lord, the Virgin, Prodromos and the apostles, but these sermons, like his hymns, do not form the major part of his corpus, and among his contemporaries we shall find no writers of sermons to compete with Germanos, Andrew and Damaskenos. The homilists of the early ninth century (see above, p. 257-259) are more or less shadowy figures, and their sermons (whose attribution is usually questionable) are not their most significant contribution. A short tale by a certain Elias, *oikonomos* of Hagia Sophia, on a miracle worked by the Theotokos in the church of Chalkoprateia,<sup>18</sup> written most probably during the reign of Michael II (but preserved only in manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), differs radically from festal Marial homilies of the eighth century: the core of the story is the salvation of a boy who entered the south aisle of the church and, being captivated by the image of the Virgin in the apse, fell into a well. The tale is placed within an earthly framework, the history of the construction and decoration of the

<sup>17</sup> On the liturgical poetry and the epigram in the Iconoclastic conflict see E. ΜΡΑΚΟΣ, *Βυζαντινὴ ποίησις καὶ εἰκονομαχικαὶ ἔριδες*, Athens 1992, 107-337.

<sup>18</sup> Ed. W. LACKNER, Ein byzantinisches Marienmirakel, *Byzantina* 13/2, 1985, 833-860; cf. C. MANGO, The Chalkoprateia Annunciation and the Pre-Eternal Logos, *Deltion Christianikes Archaialogikes Etaireias* 17, 1994, 165-170.

Chalkoprateia shrine (including an attempt of the impious Constantine V to replace the icon of the Theotokos with the cross [ed. W. Lackner, 851.27-29] and the restoration of the icon by the patriarch Tarasios), and the wording of the tale is far from the sublime homiletic, being both plain and rich in technical expressions. The genre of miracles performed by icons of the Virgin Mary becomes popular in the next centuries.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike homiletics and hymnography, the third leading genre of the Dark Century, hagiography,<sup>20</sup> shows a drastic rise in popularity from the beginning of the ninth century on. First of all, the number of hagiographical texts to have survived from the ninth century is significantly larger than from the eighth-century.

If we leave aside "possible" attributions, only five hagiographical texts can be dated to the first half of the eighth century (the Roman *Miracles of Anastasios the Persian*; the anonymous *Vita of David of Thessalonike*; Andrew's *Vita of St. Patapios* and *Vita of St. Therapon*; Damaskenos' *Enkomion of St. Barbara*). The number of the hagiographical texts produced during the period of the Monastic Revival is considerable. Such texts include Constantine of Tios' *Translatio of the relics of Euphemia of Chalcedon* (ca. 800),<sup>21</sup> Stephen the Sabaite's *Martyrion of the Twenty Sabaites* (see above, p. 169-181), Stephen the Deacon's *Vita of Stephen the Younger* (see above, p. 183-198), Leontios of Damascus' *Vita of Stephen the Sabaite* (probably first quarter of the ninth century, see above, p. 171), Theodore of Stoudios' *Eulogy of Arsenios the Great* and *enkomia* for his mother, uncle and Theophanes the Confessor (see above, p. 2451-247), Niketas of Amnia's *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful* (see above, p. 281-291), Gregory's *Enkomion of Pankratios of Taormina* (see above, p. 302-308), the anonymous *Vita of Nikephoros of Medikion* (see above, p. 198), Theosteriktos' *Vita of Niketas of Medikion* (see above, p. 198f.), Ignatios the Deacon's biographies of Tarasios and Nikephoros, as well as the *Vita of Gregory of Dekapolis* and possibly the *Vita of George of Amastris* (see above, p. 352-366), the anonymous *Vita of John of Gothia* (see above, p. 199f.), the anonymous *Translatio of the relics of Theodore of Stoudios and Joseph of Thessalonike* (see above, p. 235), Methodios' *Vita of Theophanes the Confessor* (another, anonymous *vita* seems to have been written also by a contemporary of Theophanes) and *Vita of Euthymios of Sardis*, as well as *Enkomion of Agatha* and *Vita of Nicholas of Myra* (see above, p. 372-379), and the anonymous and mutilated *Vita of the patrikios Niketas* (see above, p. 200). This group we may supplement with several hagiographical discourses produced in the middle of the ninth century, such as Theophanes of Caesarea's *Panegyric of the brothers Graptoi*,<sup>22</sup> the anonymous *Vita of Prokopios of*

<sup>19</sup> E. VON DOBSCHÜTZ, Maria Romaia, *BZ* 12, 1903, 173-214.

<sup>20</sup> For a survey of hagiography of the ninth and tenth centuries see S. EFTHYMIADIS, The Byzantine Hagiographer and his audience in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, in Ch. HØGEL (ed.), *Metaphrasis*, Bergen 1996, 59-80.

<sup>21</sup> BHG 621; ed. F. HALKIN, *Euphémie de Chalcedoine*, Brussels 1965 [SHag 41], 84-106.

<sup>22</sup> BHG 1745z; ed. J. M. FEATHERSTONE, The Praise of Theodore Graptos by Theophanes of Caesarea, *AB* 98, 1980, 93-150.

*Dekapolis*,<sup>23</sup> the anonymous *Vita of David, Symeon and George of Lesbos* (see above, p. 200-202), the hagiographical works of Sabas and Peter (see above, p. 327-340), the anonymous *Vita of Antony the Younger* (see above, p. 291-294), and the *Vita and Miracles of Phantinos the Elder* compiled by a certain Peter, a "western bishop."<sup>24</sup> There is a long list of hagiographical texts whose date of compilation (ca. the ninth century) can be established only approximately. Among these texts is the *Vita of Gregory of Agrigento* which we placed in the Dark Century, even though A. Berger recently suggested a later date for its compilation (see p. 25f.).

The quantitative increase in hagiographical activity during the first half of the ninth century in comparison with the eighth is clear to see. Hagiography replaced homiletics as the leading prose genre. What matters, however, is not only the growth in number but the change in character of ninth-century hagiography. The most evident transformation is the transition from biographies of the heroes of the remote past to the praise of contemporary saints. Very few saints' *vitae* of the Dark Century deal with personalities of the seventh century, and even in these cases (for instance, in the biographies of Alypius the Stylite, Eustolia or Theophilus of Adana) historical information is virtually non-existent. "Historical hagiography" seems to have disappeared with the *Vita of Theodore of Sykeon*, in the mid-seventh century. It was revived at the beginning of the ninth century when the majority of hagiographical discourses were concentrated around political and ecclesiastical conflicts, primarily in Constantinople; emperors and patriarchs, bishops and state functionaries became the main *dramatis personae* of the saints' *vitae*. Certainly, some ninth-century hagiographers looked back to the apostolic age, but the contemporary holy man attracted the greatest attention of the writers. The "historicity" of ninth-century hagiography contrasts markedly with the genre of homiletics which is devoted first and foremost to biblical figures and events. What we perceive as hagiography in the first two-thirds of the ninth century is a conglomerate of various subgenres. The problem of diversity versus identity was addressed during the Iconoclastic debates; the Iconodules concluded that various peoples create diverse portrayals of Christ that do not contradict the existence of the single human form assumed by the Son at his incarnation. Diverse portrayals of Christ, similar though not identical, were united by a common theological view, namely, the cognition of Christ's hypostasis. Likewise, Byzantine thinkers acknowledged the possibility of generic distinctions between various types of hagiographical discourse. Methodios contrasted a "historical tale" about a saint and a mere panegyric (see above, p. 378f.). The Byzantines applied to hagiographical works numerous terms, such as *bios* = *vita*, *diegesis* =

<sup>23</sup> BHG 1583; ed. S. EFTHYMIADIS, *La vie inédite de s. Procope le Décapolite*, AB 108, 1990, 307-319.

<sup>24</sup> BHG 1508; ed. V. SALETTA, *Vita s. Phantini confessoris*, Rome 1963. Peter witnessed an unsuccessful attack of the Hagarenes from Africa on Sicily and participated in an embassy to "Leo the Heretic", most probably Leo V; thus he lived in the first half of the ninth century.

narration, *martyrion*, *enkomion* etc., but these distinctions of category were neither strictly defined nor, in the case of Methodios, did the contrast go beyond a superficial formal distinction.

The antithesis of "history" and "panegyric" was of ancient origin and the Byzantines often employed it. This antithesis, or, to put it more plainly, the contrast "narration versus praise", was not the only binary opposition within the hagiographical genre. We may also distinguish as an antithetical pair the contemporary "eyewitness" *vitae* (the leading subgenre of the ninth century) versus the "stories of the past" of apostles and early martyrs. An example of these "stories of the past" is the *Vita of Pankratios of Taormina* (see above, p. 302-307), a highly complex and double-layered discourse. Another example is the *Vita and Acta of the apostle Andrew* which we analyzed above (see above, p. 307f.).

Several other *vitae* dealing with the events of the past survived. Among these are two legends which were very popular in the Middle ages, and not just in Byzantium: the *Vita of Alexios homo Dei*<sup>25</sup> and the *Vita of Eustathios (Eustachios) Plakidas*.<sup>26</sup> The dating of these famous texts is unfortunately so problematic that it would be risky to consider them ninth-century works, even though such a date cannot be excluded.

Another binary opposition in the genre of hagiography is the antithesis of the "monastic/ecclesiastic" *vita* versus the "secular" (or semi-secular) *vita*. While monks are the main heroes of hagiographical discourses, several *vitae* were produced describing the exploits of secular saints, such as Philaretos the Merciful, or saints who were tonsured only at the end of their career, such as Antony the Younger. The *Vita of Eustathios Plakidas* (who was a general of the emperor Trajan [98-117]) would fit into this category, if the highly conjectural date of the ninth century is correct. Another example would be the *Vita of the patriarch Nikephoros* by Ignatios the Deacon which was considered by P. Alexander to be semi-secular (see above, p. 352-356).

The main setting of the *vita* was the monastery or ascetic hermitage. Separation from family was one of the corner-stones of saintly behavior. A good example of this is Theophanes the Confessor who divorced his newly-wed bride and entered a monastery. The classic example of extreme anti-familial behavior is Alexios who fled his home and

<sup>25</sup> BHG 51-56h; ed. F. M. ESTEVES PEREIRA, *Légende grecque de l'homme de Dieu saint Alexis*, AB 19, 1900, 24-53. The common opinion is that the legend originated in Syria in the fifth century and eventually penetrated into Constantinople and Rome. The Greek text surely existed by the tenth century. Much has been written on the *Vita of Alexis*, see Ch. STOREY, *An Annotated Bibliography and Guide to Alexis Studies*, Genova 1987.

<sup>26</sup> BHG 641-643; ed. AASS Sept. VI, 106-137. We know only that the anonymous *Vita* preceded these by Niketas Paphlagon and Symeon Metaphrastes written in the tenth century. The mention of *noumera* (p. 132D) may be an indication of the ninth century since these troops are mentioned first in the so-called Taktikon of Uspenskij, composed ca. 842-43 (ed. OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes*, 53.7). The church of Eustathios was founded in Constantinople by Irene, and in the ninth century St. Ioannikios is said to have been saved by the stratelates Eustathios from poisoning.

kept his parents uninformed of his whereabouts. Eventually he returned in disguise to die unrecognized in front of them. In view of this tendency in the genre of hagiography, the introduction of what we call the "family *vita*" as promoted by Theodore of Stoudios was a seminal phenomenon.

The treatment of miracles shows a similar polarity. Miracles form a key element in most hagiographical texts, miracle collections and *vitae* proper. Yet despite this fact, some *vitae* have no miracles and others have varying "densities" of thaumaturgical activity. Thus the *Vita of Phantinos the Elder* is no more than an introduction to twenty wonders worked by the saint, lacking not only biographical data, but even a clue to the chronology of his life.

One of the more complicated distinctions to be discerned among the hagiographical subgenres is created by the different treatment accorded to the role of the saint-victims of Iconoclastic persecutions. Some were "confessors" who for the most part remained in Constantinople, such as Theodore of Stoudios. This group stayed involved in the political struggle. Others were "refugees" who left for the monasteries, primarily in Bithynia, such as Ioannikios. The "refugees" were not *lapsi* in the ecclesiastical sense of the term, but still they preferred to escape the dangers and torments of persecution. This group of refugees either wandered or became attached to specific monasteries and were lauded specifically for their thaumaturgy and clairvoyance.

This diversity of subject matter in hagiography is complemented by antithetical forms of composition (i.e. a chronological linear development versus an agglomeration of episodic units) and "grammar" (meaning vocabulary and syntax). Some hagiographers narrate the facts of the saint's entire life. Others concentrate on specific moments, such as the *translatio* of relics or posthumous miracles. In style, some *vitae* are concrete, flowing and descriptive within a framework of comprehensible spoken Greek. Others are abstract, turgid and rhetorical within a labyrinth of a barely comprehensible written idiom.

A wholly unique hagiographical subgenre is represented by what we have called the comic discourse, a sort of parodical *vita*, in which Christian didactic instruction merges with fanciful stories not only bereft of, but directly contrasted with, Christian piety (see above, p. 295-313).<sup>27</sup>

Hagiography usually had the same subject as hymnography—the exploits of saints. It is commonly supposed that *vitae* constituted the primary and hymns the secondary stage of the eulogy, but in at least some cases the process could be reversed. The anonymous hagiographer of Antony the Younger asserts that "our fathers," being fascinated by the life and deeds of Antony, "adorned his glorious head with poetical flowers (ἀσματικοῖς ἄνθεσι)," but the hagiographer's patron was not satisfied with the poetical enkomia and

<sup>27</sup> E. CURTIUS, *Jest in Hagiography*, in ID., *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. R. TRASK, New York 1953, 425-428, studied, on different source material, the tradition of the grotesque in hagiographical literature.

commissioned a proper biography (τῆς διὰ λόγου συγγραφῆς) lest such good events be left unrecorded (ἀνιστόρητον).<sup>28</sup> In this case, as well as in that of the composition of the hymn for Ioannikios by Methodios, the hymn evidently preceded the *vita*.

A "new" genre of the ninth century was chronography. We shall hereafter use this term to designate historical literature deliberately avoiding the word "historiography", because, firstly, the latter is often applied to modern historical studies, and, secondly, we consider artificial the traditional contrast of "secular history", more or less oriented to ancient standards of perfection, and annalistic "church chronicle."<sup>29</sup> Two major historical works of the period are the books by George the Synkellos and Theophanes (see above, p. 206-234). Both designated by K. Krumbacher as chronicles, they represent two absolutely different ways of penetrating into the past: the scientific approach in Synkellos and the emotionally impassioned one in Theophanes. Theophanes' *Chronography* is, probably, the only serious example of Byzantine annalistic prose. While such prose was well entrenched in the West, in Byzantium it practically started and ended with Theophanes.

It would be absurd to state that chronography (or historical literature) was a Byzantine invention of ca. 800. Synkellos, Theophanes, and their contemporaries had various predecessors, including Malalas and the anonymous *Paschal Chronicle*; they revived the genre that was dormant through the Dark Century, and it is noteworthy that the revival of the chronographical genre coincided with the "historicization" of hagiography.

It was probably the "historicization" of the world-view typical of the early ninth century that limited the power of apocalyptic prophecies. Certainly, the genre did not disappear after pseudo-Methodios, and W. Brandes underlines the continuation of apocalyptic traditions in Byzantium of the ninth century and beyond.<sup>30</sup> Byzantine apocalyptic texts survived in manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (when the expectation of the fall of Byzantium stimulated anew eschatological thought). Nevertheless scholars date some apocalyptic visions to the ninth century. Thus K. Berger

<sup>28</sup> PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Sylloge*, 186.18-187.5.

<sup>29</sup> The opposition of history and chronicle is sanctioned by K. KRUMBACHER, in his classical *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, but questioned by H.-G. BECK, *Zur byzantinischen 'Mönchschronik'*, *Speculum historiae*, Freiburg 1965, 188-197, repr. in ID., *Ideen und Realitäten in Byzanz*, London 1972, pt. XVI. The contrast of the two subgenres is nevertheless retained by modern Byzantinists, especially by R. DOSTÁLOVÁ, *Vizantijskaja istoriografija (harakter i formy)*, *VizVrem* 43, 1982, 22-24 and P. T. ANTONOPOULOS, *The Flow of Information in Medieval Historiography*, *Dodone* 20, 1991, 95; cf. M. V. BIBIKOV, *Historiographische Gattungen der byzantinischen Prosa und Poesie*, *JÖB* 32/3, 1982, 3-9; D. E. AFINOGENOV, *Some Observations on Genres of Byzantine Historiography*, *Byzantion* 62, 1992, 13-33; A. MARKOPOULOS, *Ἡ θέσις τοῦ χρονολογικοῦ στὴ βυζαντινὴ κοινωνία*, Athens 1993, 18-20.

<sup>30</sup> W. BRANDES, *Die apokalyptische Literatur*, in *Quellen zur Geschichte des frühen Byzanz*, Berlin 1990 [BBA 55], 316-322 and ID., *Endzeitvorstellungen und Lebensrost in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit*, *Varia* 3, Bonn 1991 [Poikila Byzantina 11], 28-36.



sees in an apocalypse he calls the *Daniel-Diegesis* a reflection of events from the reign of Leo III as well as the coronation of Charlemagne. Basing his views on somewhat shadowy allusions he concludes that the work was of the early ninth century.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, R. Maisano dates the anonymous redaction of the so-called *Apocalypse of Leo of Constantinople* to the early ninth century.<sup>32</sup> The arguments are circumstantial and the allusions to historical events obscure. But even if these apocalyptic visions were produced in the ninth century (which is questionable), they lack the originality of ps.-Methodios and his literary gift. Turning to the "real" past the Byzantines pushed aside speculations about eschatological future.

Another literary genre regenerated in the early ninth century was epistolography,<sup>33</sup> which immediately brought forth two brilliant authors —Theodore of Stoudios and Ignatios the Deacon (if he was the author of the anonymous letter-collection). Both chronography and epistolography differ from the "three Hs" which had been predominant in the previous period in respect of their audience: homiletics, hymnography and, in part at least, hagiography were addressed to the listening audience, to the participants in a festive ritual. Chronography and epistolography were aimed at a reading milieu.

The letter is an example of what can be called minor genres. On occasions it could be relatively extensive, but usually its length was limited and the text condensed. Another minor genre reascent in the early ninth century was the epigram, whose content was devoted primarily to human behavior; only far in the background (and not necessarily in every *gnome*) might lie the rough trail to Paradise.

Whether or not Epiphanius, who compiled a concise itinerary of the journey through Syria and the holy places, was the same man as the narrator of the *Vita of the apostle Andrew*, the work was the first example of Byzantine geographic literature, continuing the late Roman tradition of pilgrimage accounts. Identical or different, both Epiphanius share an interest in pious traveling, the Hagiopolites producing a guidebook with meager information,<sup>34</sup> and the Constantinopolitan hagiographer showing a penchant for legends and historical digressions.

<sup>31</sup> K. BERGER, *Die griechische Daniel-Diegesis. Eine altkirchliche Apokalypse*, Leiden 1976 [Studia Post-Biblica 27], 32-39.

<sup>32</sup> R. MAISANO, *L'Apocalisse apocrifa di Leone di Costantinopoli*, Naples 1975; see objections in the review by A. KAZHDAN, *Viz Vrem*, 1977, 231-233.

<sup>33</sup> On epistolography besides HUNGER, *Lit.* I, 199-239, see N. B. TOMADAKIS, *Βυζαντινή ἐπιστολογραφία*, 3rd ed. Athens 1969; V. A. SMETANIN, *Epistolografija*, Sverdlovsk 1970, and the survey of secondary sources by ID., *Novoe v razvitii predstavlenij ob epistolografii, Antichnaja drevnost' i sednie veka* 17, 1980, 5-19; G. DAGRON, *Communication et stratégie linguistique, 'H ἐπικοινωνία στό Βυζάντιο*, Athens 1993, 81-92; A. MARKOPOULOS, *'H ἐπικοινωνιακή λειτουργία τῆς ἐπιστολῆς*, *ibid.*, 163-168. The attention of scholars has focused primarily on the late antique correspondence and that of the tenth-fifteenth centuries.

<sup>34</sup> "Telegramstil" in HUNGER's (*Lit.* I, 517) words.

## B. Themes

We have observed, in the first part of the volume, that the authors of the Dark Century lingered mostly in the metaphysical cosmos of the biblical tradition, neglecting political reality, both domestic and international. This attitude underwent, around 800, a dramatic change: without losing the metaphysical perspective of divine retribution, the *littérateurs* of the ninth century finally set their eyes on what was happening on the earth. Probably, the comparison of Theophanes with pseudo-Methodios of Patara, highlights this shift in social mentality. In the *Apocalypsis* of pseudo-Methodios, the historical past and the prophetic future are not only interconnected, but are also more legendary than not, while the war with the Ishmaelites is only a link in the transcendental historical cycle. In Theophanes, the Arabs, Bulgarians and other "barbarian" peoples are real bodies, and we may describe Theophanes' picture of wars as sober when compared with the fantastic pattern of pseudo-Methodios. Certainly, one might voice the reservation that we are dealing with two different genres—but it is far from accidental that each period had its own leading genre: the pseudo-prophecy in the Dark Century, chronography during the Monastic Revival.

The theme of wars transcended the boundaries of chronography, penetrating not only into hagiography but even into the more sublime genre of hymnography: the soliciting of the Virgin and of saints for help against barbarians (sometimes plainly called Arabs) is a common formula shared by various kanons and narrative texts.<sup>35</sup>

An even more important topic for the writers of the first half of the ninth century was the dispute about the cult of icons. The theme is axial for historians (Theophanes, the patriarch Nikephoros, the *Scriptor Incertus*) and so widely extended into hagiography that scholars are nonplused when they come across *vitae*, such as those of Philaretos the Merciful or of George of Amastris, whose authors paid no attention to the controversy of the day. The defence of icon veneration is the central theme of Theodore of Stoudios' correspondence and oratory, and the ninth-century hymnographers praise both icons and the martyrs of Iconoclastic persecutions.

We have stated several times that the ninth-century picture of the dispute about icons is far from balanced, Iconoclastic polemics having been systematically destroyed by the victorious party. Only sporadically do names of Iconoclastic theologians (John the Grammarian being the most outstanding) and rare fragments of their treatises survive.<sup>36</sup> I.

<sup>35</sup> See for instance E. FOLLIERI, *La Theotokos difesa del popolo cristiano nella tradizione bizantina e italogreca, Kecharitomene. Mélanges R. Laurentin*, Paris 1990, 377-383.

<sup>36</sup> A short list is established by BECK, *Kirche*, 499. On John the Grammarian see J. GOUILLARD, *Fragments inédits d'un Antirrhétique de Jean le Grammarien*, *REB* 24, 1966, 171-181, repr. in ID., *La vie religieuse*, pt. VIII. Cf. F. I. USPENSKIJ, *Patriarch Ioann Grammatik i Rus'-Dromity u Simeona Magistra*, *Žurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosvěščenija* 267, 1890, 1-34; L. BRÉHIER, *Un patriarche sorcier à Constantinople*, *ROC* 9, 1904, 261-268; V. GRUMEL, *Jean Grammaticos et s. Théodore*

Ševčenko initiated a new trend of investigation interpreting hagiographical discourses of the period which make no mention of the icon issue as biographies of Iconoclastic saints. A transformation from Iconoclast persecutor to Orthodox Iconophile hero is not impossible (we know, for instance, that the Arian governor of Egypt Artemios was transformed into an Orthodox saint [see above, p. 28f.]), although it is hard to prove this in every particular case. We also have to be cautious since indifference with regard to icons is not necessarily proof of an Iconoclastic position. Even such an ardent Iconophile as the future patriarch Methodios could sometimes be silent about the subject of icons. At any rate, there is no trace of an anti-iconic polemic or anti-iconic activity in the extant hagiographical texts, but naturally such passages, had they ever existed, could have been expunged by the Orthodox censors. There is, however, a text (quite probably Iconoclastic in origin) that shows the stitchwork of later editorial revision.

The text in question is the *Panegyric* of the Council of Nicaea II of 787 by an otherwise unknown Epiphanius, titled deacon of "Catania" (PG 98, 1313-1332). C. Crimi, while publishing an Italian translation of the panegyric,<sup>37</sup> noted in the preamble that there was a marked stylistic distinction between the central part of the document (according to Crimi, a refutation of the Iconoclastic doctrine and the development of the idea of the historicity of Christ's incarnation) and its encomiastic conclusion, a "hymn in prose". The difference between the two parts, however, is not only stylistic but terminological and conceptual. In the main part, Epiphanius avoids two crucial points of the Iconodulic concept: the icon and the cult of Mary the Theotokos. Only in the concluding ("hymnic") section do we find praise of the Mother of God and ever-Virgin through whom Christ became incarnate, whereas in the main text there is no mention of the Theotokos. Even more striking is the difference with regard to the term "icon": in the short encomiastic conclusion the term is repeated five times in its direct sense of painted image; on the other hand, in the lengthy main section, the word occurs only once, in a metaphorical characterization of man as God's image and likeness (col. 1316C). Moreover, the only term used there for images is "idol". Sometimes it appears in an "Orthodox" context meaning the statues of the pagan gods, but in several cases Epiphanius' cautious statements have a non-traditional connotation. Thus, in his polemics against idolatry, the writer sets up a goal that has Iconoclastic overtones: to reestablish on the whole earth a rational and spiritual worship (col. 1317B). In other words, he thinks that the Church was defiled by material

Studite, *EO* 36, 1937, 181-189; LIPŠIC, *Očerki*, 296-301; C. MANGO, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, Cambridge Mass. 1958 [Dumbarton Oaks Studies 3], 240-243; U. CRISCUOLO, Sugli epigrammi iconoclastici di Giovanni (il Grammatico?), *Syndesmos: Studi in onore di R. Anastasi*, Catania 1994, 143-151. A. KAMBYLIS, Ein versteckter Hexameter in Ioannes Georgides, Sentent. 542, *JÖB* 37, 1987, 95 n. 1, suggests that John was the compiler of a collection of *gnomai* (the so-called *Florilegium Marcianum*).

<sup>37</sup> C. CRIMI, Il 'discorso encomiastico' di Epifanio diacono di Catania al secondo concilio di Nicea (787), *Synaxis* 2, Catania 1984, 89-127.

objects and must now return to its ancient purity. Accordingly, Epiphanius, unlike Orthodox hagiographers and hymnographers, treats relics (λείψανα) negatively, attaching their triumph to "the old idolatrous shrines" (col. 1320D). The main thrust of Epiphanius' discourse is not praise of the icon but a rejection of the cult of idols.<sup>38</sup>

When was the *Encomium* compiled? At the beginning of his speech, Epiphanius addresses the divine convention gathered to clarify the mystery of Christ in conjunction with the doctrine of the fathers. This was not the first time that such an event was taking place —Christ's mystery had been announced (meaning Christ's preaching ca. 30 AD) to the entire world almost 800 years ago (col. 1313C-1316A). The figure "800" does not match the common opinion that Epiphanius was addressing the Council of Nicaea, but it fits perfectly well the Iconoclastic convention of 815, and in fact Euthymios of Sardis spoke at this gathering about the chronological distance of 800 years from Christ's advent.<sup>39</sup> Thus the speech of Epiphanius was in all probability delivered at the Iconoclastic council of 815 and later retouched in somewhat unwieldy fashion by an Orthodox editor. In the revised form it was inserted in the minutes of the council of 787; this must have happened before 873 when Anastasius the Bibliothecarius completed the Latin translation of the acts of the Council of Nicaea II.

There exist no imperial panegyrics of this period with the sole exception of Theodore of Stoudios' letter to the empress Irene. This absence might be explained by the predominantly Iconoclastic orientation of the Byzantine rulers from Leo III to Theophilos. But even the Orthodox Nikephoros I who, as a victim of a Bulgarian attack, was a good candidate for sanctity, found virulent criticism in Theophanes' *Chronography*. Theophanes' and the patriarch Nikephoros' characterization of the predecessors of Leo III is scolding. They are presented as either cruel tyrants or languid pawns in a big political game. Irene, the restorer of icon veneration, the actual hero of *Eikonodoulia*, nonetheless lacks Theophanes' approval.

Whereas many bishops and monks whose attitude toward Iconoclasm was, to say the least, indifferent were painted in shining colors by diligent hagiographers, Irene did not find a proper encomiast: her *vita*,<sup>40</sup> which survived in a single manuscript (Vatic. gr. 2014) variously dated from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, is no more than a pastiche from Theophanes. Curiously enough, it retains some details not favorable to the saintly empress. The only substantial addition to Theophanes comes at the very end of the

<sup>38</sup> A. KAZHDAN, Epiphanius of Catania, a Panegyrist of the Council in Nicaea of 787?, *Koinonia* 15/2, 1991, 145-153, with a correction ID., Sitodotes: a Mistake, *Koinonia* 17/1, 1993, 85.

<sup>39</sup> George the Monk, 779.10. The passage is borrowed from the *Vita of Niketas of Medikion* by Theosteriktos, AASS Apr. I, XXV, ch. 35.

<sup>40</sup> BHG 2205; ed. F. HALKIN, Deux impératrices de Byzance, *AB* 106, 1988, 5-27. See on it W. TREADGOLD, The Unpublished Saint's Life of the Empress Irene, *ByzF* 8, 1982, 237-251; cf. P. SPECK, Ikonen unter dem Kopfkissen oder über die Dauerhaftigkeit von Legenden und historischen Klichees, *Klio* 72, 1990, 246-253.

compilation (from p. 25.26 onward), in which the author relates how Irene was exiled to the island of Lesbos, where she died, and how her body was translated to the church of St. Nicholas on Prinkipo. If we assume that her relics were retranslated from Prinkipo to the mausoleum of Justinian<sup>41</sup> in the Constantinopolitan church of the Holy Apostles by the end of the tenth century, the compilation must have been produced before this date.

Looking back into the past, Theophanes found several praiseworthy emperors, such as Constantine the Great, but as far as we know, the genre of the "princely mirror" had not yet been recreated, the latest late Roman panegyrics of an emperor being poems by George of Pisidia, primarily his *Herakleiad* produced in 630.<sup>42</sup> The "new" rhetoric (an expression coined by D. M. Olster) of George was not employed again until at least the very end of the ninth century, a matter that will be discussed in the second volume.

The passage closest to the "princely mirror" is the speech of Justin II to Tiberios recorded by Theophanes on the basis of Theophylaktos Simokatta,<sup>43</sup> with only insignificant alterations. The key points of the speech are stated in accordance with the imperial ideal as formulated in the prefaces to state decrees and following the precepts of Menander:<sup>44</sup> first, the power of the emperor comes from God; second, the emperor must care for his subjects; thirdly, the ruler enjoys a special relationship with certain privileged groups, such as his courtiers and soldiers; fourthly, Government must act fairly, and the emperor heed no flatterers (here Theophanes changes "flatterers" to "soldiers," which his editor, C. De Boor, emends back to "flatterers", disregarding the manuscript tradition); lastly, the ruler must protect the property of the wealthy while providing, on the other hand, for the needs of the poor.

Military prowess had not yet found a particular place on the scale of imperial or generally human virtues. Valiant emperors, like Leo III and Constantine V, were discredited as Iconoclasts,<sup>45</sup> and the writers of the period dealt mostly with Byzantine defeats rather than victories. There were no holy warriors among the heroes of the ninth-century hagiographers either, unless we consider Eustathios Plakidas a general (*stratelates*), who successfully fought barbarians and reached the Hydaspus (Indus) —but the attribution of this *Vita* to our period is very conjectural. It is worth noting that the sole

<sup>41</sup> Ph. GRIERSON, *The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors*, *DOP* 16, 1962, 33f.

<sup>42</sup> Ed. A. PERTUSI, *Giorgio di Pisidia, Poemi* 1, Ettal 1960. See on him M. WHITBY, *A New Image for a New Age: George of Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius*, *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, Krakow 1994, 197-225; D. M. OLSTER, *Roman Defeat, Christian Response, and the Literary Construction of the Jew*, Philadelphia 1994, 51-71.

<sup>43</sup> See on it V. E. VAL'DENBERG, *Reč' Justina II k Tiveriju*, *Izvestija Akademii nauk SSSR. Otd. gumanitarnyh nauk*, 1928, no. 2: 111-140, cf. I. S. ČIČUROV, *Feofan-kompiljator Feofilakta Simokaty, Antičnaja drevnost' i srednie veka* 10, 1973, 121.

<sup>44</sup> H. HUNGER, *Prooimion*, Vienna 1964, 49-154.

<sup>45</sup> On the dispraise ("Diffamierung") of Constantine V in the works of the Iconoclasts of the ninth century see I. ROCHOW, *Kaiser Konstantin V. (741-775). Materialien zu seinem Leben und Nachleben*, Frankfurt a.M. 1994 [Berliner Byzantinische Studien 1], 131-137.

substantial correction introduced by Theophanes in the speech of Justin II is evidently anti-military (though he retained Theophylaktos' advice [point 3] to be solicitous about the well-being of soldiers). The ideal of militant male civilization, so typical of the western Middle Ages, had not yet been sanctioned in ninth-century Byzantium, and accordingly the woman held an important position, at least in the milieu portrayed by Theodore of Stoudios. It is significant that the restoration of the cult of icons is attached to two female figures —Irene at the beginning of our period and Theodora at its end— while among *literati* of the period "the princely nun" Kassia holds a momentous position.

The three principal desires of the flesh (sex, food, and entertainment in the form of races and public spectacles at the Hippodrome) were specifically condemned in the *Vita of Stephen the Younger*. Of these three, the sexual theme seems to have attracted the special attention of authors of the ninth century. Sometimes it makes its appearance as a subtext within the language and vocabulary, as in Theodore of Stoudios' letter to the *patrikia* Anna with its eroticized vocabulary of Christian love. At other times it is introduced in order to refute "pagan" and illicit yearning. Finally, it often serves as a platform from which to attack the lawless sexual conduct of various emperors, from Herakleios to Constantine VI. The struggle for chastity forms the artistic nexus of the *Vita of Theophanes the Confessor*. The patriarch Methodios seems to have confronted sexual temptation in real life as well as in his literary work. One of the main episodes of the *Vita of Stephen the Younger* is a "perverse" romance of Stephen and a nun. The *Vita of Andrew the Apostle* is also rife with the theme of sexuality.

### C. Author and audience

Even though the author's personality usually remains offstage,<sup>46</sup> it is possible to establish some features of the writer's growing self-consciousness during the period under investigation. First of all, the genre of letters required or at least allowed expression of individual messages, both biographical and ideological: if not all the missives of Theodore of Stoudios contain personal information and personal advice, many of them do, and Ignatios speaks of his own experiences and his own concerns, as well as the concerns of his church.

Writers gradually came to speak about themselves in less personal genres, such as chronography and hagiography. A twentieth-century reader may be disappointed by the

<sup>46</sup> Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, 'Writer's Intrusion' in *Early Byzantine Literature, XVIIIth ICBS. Major Papers*, Moscow 1991, 436-439, referring to Theophanes, George the Synkellos and the patriarch Nikephoros, stresses the "stylistic anonymity" of historical writing ca. 800.

lack of personal data in Theophanes, but from the early medieval view-point his recollection of the frozen Bosphorus and children playing on the ice is a tremendous achievement. The ninth-century hagiographers not only claimed to be (and often were) eyewitnesses of the events described, but acted in the *vita* as pupils and companions of the saint —like Sabas or Methodios who, at a certain moment, shared a cell with their heroes. Certainly, the author most commonly introduced himself as a figure of modesty and humility: time and again it was stressed that the writer was not up to his task and if he took to writing it was under the pressure of necessity or by the prompting, ἄπομνή, of a friend or patron. But on the other hand, the first dawns of auctorial self-esteem can be noticed. Thus Epiphanius of Constantinople not only mentions his own travels, but prides himself upon being the first to describe in a right manner (αἰσίως) the deeds of the apostle Andrew. In order to do this, he claims, he researched works by Clement of Rome, Euagrius of Sicily, Epiphanius of Cyprus and other reliable sources (PG 120, 216C-217A). Furthermore, even in such a ritualized genre as hymnography the new trend was represented by an extremely (by medieval standards) individual poet: Clement.

Literary activity was, to some extent, a holy duty, even though the biographers of several writers (as in the cases of Theophanes or Michael the Synkellos) would forget to emphasize (or find irrelevant) the literary interests of their heros. Sabas, in the *Vita of Peter of Atroa*, underlined the idea of the supernatural character of literary creativity: before commencing his work he prayed to the “Father of fathers” to open his mouth, and he was granted a vision. He saw a large shrine whose beauty was beyond description and whose glory was ineffable. At the right side of the altar Sabas saw Peter in priestly vestments, and the saint placed in Sabas’ hands a vessel “from the divine table” full of fragrant oil. The vision “opened Sabas’ mouth”, and only then did he dare to begin writing (Laurent, *Vie*, 69.39-46).

As in the previous period, some *literati* of this time were proclaimed saints, such as Stephen the Sabaite, Theophanes the Confessor, Theodore of Stoudios, Joseph of Thessalonike, Clement, Theophanes Graptos, Methodios, and Michael Synkellos. But numerous authors, whom we know by name, were not granted the crown of holiness; among them are outstanding writers, such as Ignatios the Deacon, Kassia, Niketas of Amnia, Sabas, and Epiphanius of Constantinople. The “secularization” of authorship had already taken its first steps before the critical change in the next period.

Who were the *littérateurs* of the first half of the ninth century as regards their vocation —their walk of life— and their geographical ties? Numerous writers whose biographies are more or less known were monks and nuns: Theodore of Stoudios and his brother Joseph (eventually metropolitan of Thessalonike), Theophanes the Confessor, Kassia, both biographers of Ioannikios —Sabas and Peter—, Stephen the Sabaite, Niketas of Amnia, Gregory of Pagourios, Epiphanius of the Constantinopolitan monastery of Kallistratou (unless we accept the view of E. Kurtz that the *Vita of the Virgin* was produced only in the eleventh century). Some of them entered monasteries early in their career. Other writers

were members of the clergy: patriarchs (Methodios), *synkelloi* (George and Michael), bishops (Ignatios or Peter, the biographer of Phantinos the Elder) and deacons (Stephen of Constantinople). Many of these priestly writers were tonsured before having reached the episcopate. It is quite likely that Constantine of Tios, Theophanes Graptos and Leontios of Damascus also belonged to the monastic or ecclesiastical hierarchy. To the best of our knowledge, there is not a single securely identified lay writer among this overwhelmingly monastic and ecclesiastical milieu, unless we count as such Nikephoros, a high-ranking secular official who was rapidly raised to the patriarchal throne. It is possible that the anonymous author of the *Parastaseis* was a layman.

Only a few writers (specifically, Stephen the Sabaite and Leontios of Damascus) were active in Palestine and Syria; probably, we may add Epiphanius the Hagiopolites to the list, if he can be distinguished from Epiphanius of Constantinople —but his *Diegesis* is a concise guidebook and can hardly be considered a work of literature. Several men originated in Syria and, like Michael the Synkellos, started their ecclesiastical and scholarly careers in this part of the world, but eventually moved to the capital and threw in their lot with the destiny of the Church of Constantinople. Not a single known writer of the early ninth century was active in Greece (the country was still recovering from successive waves of invasions), except for the Constantinopolitan citizen Joseph, appointed metropolitan of Thessalonike, and Niketas of the Paphlagonian village Amnia, exiled to Karioupolis in the Peloponnese. Peter, the hagiographer of Phantinos the Elder, worked in South Italy, and it was possibly the place of origin of several anonymous and pseudonymous hagiographical works, such as the biographies of Leo of Catania and Pankratios of Taormina, as well as the *Vita of Philip of Argyron*, a saint of the period of the emperor Arcadius (395-408), allegedly produced by the monk Eusebios, his fellow traveler and assistant.<sup>47</sup>

Epiphanius of Catania, an Iconoclastic (?) rhetorician, and the hymnographer Theophanes were active in South Italy, whereas the patriarch Methodios who originated from Italy was, throughout his life, connected with Constantinople and her environs. Joseph the Hymnographer, also a scion of Sicily, migrated to Greece and, via Thessalonike, eventually came to the capital.

<sup>47</sup> BHG 1531; ed. AASS May III, 1\*-6\*, 26-36. Latin version in BHL 6819. Little has been written on this *Vita*; see, for instance, A. LUZZI, Il Tipico-Sinassario Vat. Barb. 500 e una notizia agiografica marginale per s. Filippo di Agira, *AB* 111, 1993, 291-299. P. COLLURA, Filippo di Agira, *Biblioteca Sanctorum* 5, 1964, 722-724, suggests that the *Vita* was compiled in the eighth century, but the text could have been even younger, if we assume that the toparch Argyros who possessed ktemata (p. 2\*D) and had men in dependency upon him (at least one ἄνθρωπος of his is mentioned; p. 4\*B) belonged to the lineage known in Italy from the late tenth century on (J.-F. VANNIER, *Familles byzantines: les Argyroi*, Paris 1975 [Byzantina Sorbonensia 1], 58f. Vannier does not take “our” Argyros into account). The realia of the *Vita* remind us of the ninth and tenth centuries: like the *Book of the Eparch*, pseudo-Eusebios represents stock-traders bringing their herds to the Sangarios (p. 1\*\*B) and uses the word *templum*, strangely located in the left aisle of the church (p. 2\*A), which is probably a later term.

A much greater role in the literary development of the first half of the ninth century was played by Asia Minor. For at least part of his life Ignatios dwelt in Nicaea. Theophanes the Confessor left the capital for Sigriane, on the southern shore of the Propontis, and founded his monastery of Megas Agros on the island of Kalonymos, near Sigriane. Constantine, the author of the *Translatio of the relics of St. Euphemia*, originated or lived in Tios, on the border of Bithynia and Paphlagonia; Theophanes, the encomiast of the brothers Graptoi, is called "of Caesarea" (in Cappadocia?); the hagiographers Sabas, Peter and Theosteriktos belonged to the monastic milieu of the Bithynian Olympos. Close to Asia Minor lies the island of Lesbos, well-known to the anonymous author of the *Vita of David, Symeon and George*.

Constantinople played a significant but not exclusive role in the Monastic Revival of literature. Certainly, both patriarchs, Nikephoros and Methodios (the latter despite his Sicilian descent) were Constantinopolitan authors, as well as the *synkellos* George. Stephen the Deacon served in the Great Church (and produced a very Constantinopolitan *vita*). Theodore of Stoudios and his brother Joseph were born to a Constantinopolitan family, and Theodore administered the Stoudios monastery in the capital. Kassia, Gregory of Pagourios and, probably, Epiphanius also joined Constantinopolitan monasteries. Niketas, born in Amnia, reached adolescence when his parents dwelt in the capital; eventually he wrote the *Vita of Philaretos* while exiled in Greece. Michael the Synkellos and Theophanes Graptos originated from Palestine but, like the patriarch Methodios, worked primarily in Constantinople. And the *Parastaseis*, albeit an anonymous *opus*, is beyond doubt a work produced in the capital.

It was only natural that hymnography retained its festive, ritual character marked by close contact between the poet and his audience, both deeply involved in the celebration of the event. Theophanes begins the *Kanon on saints Ireneus, Or and Oropsis* with the exclamation: "Today we celebrate the memory" (AHG 12, 393.2-3), and he addresses his listeners as "fond of feast-days" (p. 402.236). Despite the ritualized (and formalized) content of the hymn the poets have a tendency to emphasize their active role by using various words and expressions which would describe "the process of performance". Thus Theophanes, in the *Kanon on the Annunciation*,<sup>48</sup> repeatedly uses verbs of expression (βοῶ, μὴνύω, καταμηνύω, καταγγέλλω, ἐπαγγέλλομαι, διαλογίζομαι, φθέγγομαι), as well as the nouns connected with the process and organs of speech (φωνή, λόγος, ῥῆμα, χεῖλη), and he begins the poem with the words: "To set the lyre in motion." The hymnographer Theophanes' vocabulary is oriented to oral performance, the purpose of which is to uplift the audience emotionally so as to heighten the sense of jubilation and fear.

Hagiographers also address the audience directly. The anonymous author of the *Vita of Nikephoros of Medikion*, for instance, has before him a "God-loving congregation" which is not composed only of monks —the orator specifically instructs those of his

<sup>48</sup> CHRIST-PARANIKAS, *AnthCarm*, 236-242.

listeners who have children.<sup>49</sup> Theosteriktos exclaims, in the preamble to the *Vita of Niketas of Medikion* (AASS Apr. I, XVIII): "O holy audience!" And Epiphanius of Constantinople addresses to his listeners the ritual salutation: "Peace be with you all," and gets their response equally used during liturgy: "As well as in your spirit" (PG 120, 233C).

Even more explicit is Peter, one of the hagiographers of Ioannikios. Concluding the introductory chapter to the saint's *Vita* he addresses his audience saying: "Now that you have heard this preamble (lit. "gateways") of lofty conduct, so august and immense (Peter alludes to the words of Basil the Great, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron* 2, 1.4), the flame of divine love makes you eager to be informed about the wondrous and loving behavior and teaching (lit. "address")<sup>50</sup> of the man... If you desire to hear, I will speak" (AASS Nov. 2/1, p. 385A). Later he asserts that he has omitted most of Ioannikios' miracles lest the account prove too burdensome "on you the listeners" (p. 425B), and three times he directly invokes his audience as witnesses of his narrative.

Were these phrases actual exclamations or dead formulas? Whatever the case, not every genre was aimed at listeners, and it is hard to imagine that the *Select Chronography* by George the Synkellos could be performed orally. The letter was a personal genre, and the pleasure to be derived from receiving a letter differed from the ritualized festivity celebrated in a hymn. Theodore writes to his uncle Platon: "I took your holy letter in my unworthy hands as if it were a tablet with divine script, and I listened to your written voice as to that of an angel or apostle" (ep. 3.11-14). The word "listened" (ἤκουσα) here may be interpreted either literally or metaphorically. In a letter, addressed to a Proterios, Theodore uses the same verb; the letter sent by Proterios, he says, was so distressing that his ears (ἀκοάς) were terrified as he listened (μὲ ἀκούσαντα) (ep. 297.2-3). However, Theodore read (ἀνέγνων) another letter of Proterios, and even wondered whether it really was by the hand of his correspondent (ep. 303.3). Whether "read" or "listened", the letter was primarily aimed at a restricted audience, at individual use. Often it was a part of daily business, much more intimate than the sermon and hymn. With the letter literature descended from the level of sublime liturgical festivity to the ground of earthly human fates: Andrew, in the *Megas Kanon*, was concerned with the salvation of the soul, whereas Theodore, with all his piety, was concerned with more practical items.

<sup>49</sup> HALKIN, La vie de s. Nicéphore, AB 78, 1960, par. 4.2, 5.45.

<sup>50</sup> Another possible translation of προσήγορία is "name", and in fact Peter promises to speak first of all of τὴν τοῦ ὀνόματος κλήσιν. Most probably he is playing with the double meaning of the word.

### D. Characters and composition

Did the character, the protagonist, have any real substance for the Byzantine writer? The question is not as strange as it may at first sound. In an interesting article on realism in Byzantine literature, the Rumanian scholar N. S. Tanasoca<sup>51</sup> avoids asking the question of how the image of the hero in Byzantine literature was structured, even though we might have assumed that realism is a key to the successful delineation of character. In the few available works on Byzantine literary esthetic the emphasis is usually put on the survival of classical vocabulary and rhetorical figures, not on the way the Byzantines portrayed their heroes and anti-heroes; only seldom (and mostly for the eleventh and twelfth centuries) do Byzantinists highlight this aspect.

Two principles of the Byzantine literary portrait are usually pointed out: the predominance of the *topoi*, standardized formulas drawn from the ancient pool of images and expressions (the notorious *mimesis*, or imitation),<sup>52</sup> and representation of people as personifying certain good or evil qualities. It is easy to demonstrate the existence of established "laws of laudation" (νόμοι ἐγκωμίων) according to which the Byzantine hagiographer constructed his *vitae*, time and again borrowing ready-made building blocks from his predecessors.<sup>53</sup> This observation is unquestionably true, but it is equally true that certain modifications took place over time, and —on rare occasions— images distinct from the traditional *topos* were created.

Two main social types dominate the gallery of portraits left by the writers of the first half of the ninth century: the emperor and the saint. Two centuries later, Michael Psellos used systematically nine aspects to characterize the emperors he wrote about: origin, way of life, education and attitude toward scholars, eloquence, piety, personal courage, administrative activity and ability, intellect, and moral qualities.<sup>54</sup> The range of colors employed by the ninth-century historians in their portraits of emperors is much more limited. While education, eloquence and intellect are practically ignored, and origin, way of

<sup>51</sup> N. S. TANASOCA, La littérature byzantine et le réalisme, *Études byzantines et post-byzantines* 1, Bucharest 1979, 77-93.

<sup>52</sup> On the *topoi* in Byzantine literature see the general survey by A. GARZYA, Topik und Tendenz in der byzantinischen Literatur, *Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Kl. der Österreichischen Akad. der Wiss.* 113, 1976, 301-319. It is indicative that Garzya speaks of the repetition of "Themen, Motiven, Bildern, Metaphern, Zitaten, polemischen Formen und anderen Kunstgriffen" (p. 305), but not images of acting men and women! H. HUNGER, On the Imitation (μίμησις) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature, *DOP* 23/24, 1969/70, 15-38, repr. in ID., *Byzantinische Grundlagenforschung*, London 1973, pt. XV, also concentrates on mythological motifs and quotations, not the system of human images.

<sup>53</sup> See H. LOPAREV, Vizantijskie žitija svjatyh VIII-IX vekov, *VizVrem* 17, 1910, 21-36.

<sup>54</sup> Ja. LJUBARSKIJ, *Mikhail Psell. Ličnost' i tvorčestvo*, Moscow 1978, 209.

life and even personal courage are pushed far into the background, it is piety and moral qualities that are granted the privileged position.

Let us examine the building blocks of three imperial images in the *Concise History* of the patriarch Nikephoros: those of Herakleios, Justinian II, and Leo III. There is no coherent characterization of these rulers in the text, and their portraits are built up by means of circumstantial comments. Nikephoros does speak of the military expeditions of Herakleios, and even notes that "the Roman emperor cared more about his state (πολιτεία) than his own life" (par. 15.2-3). Yet this comment is not Nikephoros' personal opinion but an "alien" view-point, expressed by a Persian archon. Nikephoros himself does not praise Herakleios for his military prowess: even when describing Herakleios' valiant deed —the victory (in single combat?) over the Persian general Razates (par. 14)— the historian stresses the valor of the Persian ("brave and experienced warrior", "experienced archer") not of the emperor. Theophanes, who also ignores Herakleios' gallantry, attributes the victory over Razates to the "power of God and the assistance of the Theotokos" (p. 318.19).

While the military bravery of the emperor is silenced, Nikephoros is interested in his moral virtues, or, rather, his lack of them. At the end of the story of the reign of Herakleios, Nikephoros describes the grave illness (difficulties with urinating)<sup>55</sup> of the emperor and launches into an explanation: "He suffered this ultimate punishment for the transgression of law (παράνομία), namely the marriage to his own niece" (par. 27.8-10). Elsewhere Nikephoros applies to this marriage epithets which underscore the emperor's lawlessness and ignobility (par. 11.4, 9 and 13), and talking of the general conjuncture of the state emphasizes Herakleios' distress and despondency (par. 8.1 and 6-7).

Justinian II's military prowess is also an insignificant detail in the eyes of Nikephoros. He is aware of the emperor's successful expeditions (for instance, against the Sklaviniar) but he finds for them only words of reprobation: the emperor broke the peace and destroyed the good order of the state (par. 38.3-4). As in the case of Herakleios, Nikephoros contrasts the emperor with a general, now the patrikios Leontios, commander of the Anatolikon, "who often distinguished himself in wars" (par. 40.3-4). The bad moral qualities of Justinian, primarily his cruelty (par. 39.1-2 and 9; cf. par. 45.9-10 and 53-55), are very much in the foreground of the narration.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, let us consider Leo III, the emperor who checked the assault of the Arabs. On August 15, 718 the Arabs realized that they were incapable of taking Constantinople and called off the siege of the Byzantine capital. The event in Nikephoros' presentation is treated impersonally: "The Saracen cavalry and fleet withdrew from the Imperial [city]"

<sup>55</sup> J. LASKARATOS and others, The First Case of Episporias: an Unknown Disease of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, *British Journal of Urology* 76, 1995, 380-383.

<sup>56</sup> It does not matter, for our purpose, whether Nikephoros is honest in his characterization of Justinian II or whether we are obliged to rehabilitate the emperor's image from the accusations of Nikephoros and Theophanes, as did C. HEAD, *Justinian II of Byzantium*, Madison Wis. 1972.



(par. 56.3-4). And Theophanes makes no mention of the role of the emperor in the defence of the capital, although unlike Nikephoros he emphasizes the intervention of the divine power: God, answering the petition of the Theotokos, sent a tempest that destroyed the Arab navy; awesome divine signs (θεομηνία) could be observed; and Providence allowed ten Arab ships to survive in order to announce to their countrymen the great acts of God (p. 399.7-17). In Nikephoros the divine wrath appears in a different and more prosaic context: Leo III interpreted the eruption of a volcano in the Cretan sea as the sign of God's wrath; then he moved "against piety" and attempted to abolish the cult of icons (par. 60.1-6). Those pious men who resisted the imperial will suffered many punishments and tortures (par. 62.10-12). Like Herakleios, Leo contracted a serious illness (in both cases the sickness is called dropsy [par. 27.4, 64.2]) —although Nikephoros does not say so here, he is evidently implying that the illness was the retribution for the emperor's depravity.

The image of the emperor Nikephoros I as painted by Theophanes is more complex. Cautiously Theophanes hints that his opinion does not coincide with that of other observers: he contrasts the gullibility of the masses with the views of those who grasped well (εὖ εἰδότες) the nature of the events (p. 477.8), meaning first of all himself. Those who grasped the events well, repeats Theophanes, laughed at Nikephoros' impudence. And he then embarks on a physical characterization: as Nikephoros was sitting within the imperial chamber, his abominable face was gloomy (p. 480.26-29). Not only does Theophanes introduce a short description of the face of his anti-hero ("abominable" and "gloomy") but the countenance is incorporated in Nikephoros' actions: he feigned melancholy, he lamented, he wept "womanish tears" —only to deceive those around him. Such an approach is unusual in ninth-century Byzantine texts.

Theophanes is not concerned with the military prowess of Nikephoros; on the contrary, the historian prefers to emphasize the fact that the emperor was defeated by the Arabs (p. 481.2) and perished in the war with the Bulgarians (p. 490f.). Even the theme of piety, or, to be precise, impiety of the anti-hero is touched only in passing: Theophanes calls the emperor "an ardent friend" of Manichaeans and Athinganoi (p. 488.22-24), and asserts that he has never acted "in accordance with God" (p. 480.23-24). But generally the historian refrains from passing judgment on Nikephoros' creed. The portrait focuses on the ruler's wicked moral qualities and mishandling of state affairs.<sup>57</sup> Nikephoros is lawless (p. 480.21), a tyrant (p. 476.5, 478.4), all-devouring (p. 477.32), a παραλογιστής, the man who cheats by deceiving calculation (p. 479.31, an allusion to his function of logothete before ascending to the imperial throne). And his main characteristics are avarice (p. 477.30, 478.31, 485.21, 494.11), greed (p. 489.22), villainy and deception (p. 480.28-29). The *coup de grâce* comes with a biblical parallel: the *basileus* is an imitator of the traitor Judas (p. 477.23-24).

<sup>57</sup> On Nikephoros I's politics see P. NIAVIS, *The Reign of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I (802-811)*, Edinburgh 1984.

The portrait of the hagiographical protagonist usually included, whether wholly or in part, several stereotyped biographical elements, sometimes defined as "encomiastic laws," that followed a more or less strict order: the place of birth of the saint, the names and social position of his/her parents, a pious interpretation of the saint's name, the saint's upbringing and attitude toward marriage, ascetic training and struggle to attain true faith, demise and miracles. Among the *vitae* we examined above, the biographies of two patriarchs, Tarasios and Nikephoros, by Ignatios the Deacon, fit into this stereotyped framework, whereas the *Vita of Philaretos* by Niketas of Amnia neglects such traditional elements as the saint's education, ascetic exercises and theological views; and as for Philaretos' attitude to marriage, it differs drastically from mainstream ninth-century hagiography. Other saints of this period are granted a non-traditional biography, one of whom is Antony the Younger.

In principle, the protagonists in ninth-century literary texts are painted in black and white, as heroes or anti-heroes. In rare cases, however, such a simplistic approach can be slightly modified. Even hagiographical heroes can experience fear or stumble in their righteous actions, and occasionally the anti-heroes become capable, at least in their own self-perception, of expressing human qualities. In some texts the figure of the anti-hero vanishes completely. The minor characters (such as the robber in the *Vita of Antony the Younger*) are more often morally ambiguous and liable to sudden change.

Works of this period are usually structured in linear fashion with occasional recourse to flashbacks or prolepsis. They preserve the tendency toward monotony so typical of the literature of the Dark Century. The text of the latter, however, forms usually a clearly defined unit, dominated by a single idea given body by recurring artistic elements, slightly differing from one another and rarely interrupted by digressions. The principle of monotonous composition did not disappear in the first half of the ninth century, but it seems to have been significantly reduced: there is no ninth-century poetry of the type of the *Megas Kanon*, nor such an iterative hagiographical work as the *Miracles of St. Artemios*. Even though the annalistic structure of the *Chronography* of Theophanes is by definition uniform, its paragraphs usually opening with the monotonous formula "in the same year", these annalistic units are filled up with individual stories: the evil actions of Justinian II, Constantine V or Nikephoros I follow specific patterns, but lack the uniformity of, say, Artemios' miracles. In the same vein, although the hagiography of the ninth century does not stray altogether from a preference for monotony, it does tend increasingly to employ divers novelettes to illustrate the deeds of the saint. The *Vita of Antony the Younger* includes numerous independent episodic units of a wholly varied character. We mentioned above (see above, p. 291-294) the story of how the saint claimed to be a medical doctor and successfully healed a barren woman with the help of a girdle made from the fragments of a Gospel book. Another novelette from the same *vita* is the story of the "head of the requests" (ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν δεήσεων) Stephen, who was appointed to investigate the accusation against the saint. The latter was denounced as having appropriated the property of the partisans of the rebel Thomas, and as having refused to restore the confiscated properties.

After various contrivances Antony was arrested, but Stephen failed to condemn him and instead was himself demoted and punished (p. 209-211).

Episodic units in the *Vita of Antony the Younger* are integral parts of the saint's biography. Other hagiographical discourses might contain episodes only tangentially connected with the main narrative. Thus, the author of the *Vita of David, Symeon and George* gives us a novelette about a rich and pious widow who lived in Constantinople and had two daughters. The oldest, Hypatia, was brilliantly educated in poetry and grammar as well as in the church fathers and desired to enter a convent. The mother, however, who was proud of Hypatia's physical beauty and the excellence of her mind, had plans for the girl to continue the family line and prepared her for an earthly marriage, ignoring the daughter's spiritual vocation. Suddenly, the girl had a vision—an old man in shining robes appeared before her. Alarmed by the vision, she was struck dumb, losing her voice that had only recently attained remarkable eloquence. On a tablet, the poor girl scribbled a note asking her mother to bring her to the stylite Symeon who dwelt at the time in Pegai, not far from Constantinople. For seven days the family stayed in Pegai with Symeon, and each day the mute girl was given consecrated elements and water, until she regained her speech. Subsequently the widow, both her daughters and some of their maids took the monastic habit and settled down in the nunnery founded for them by Symeon (p. 234-236).

Stephen, the author of the *Martyrdom of the twenty Sabaites*, and Niketas, the author of the *Vita of Philaretos the Merciful*, came up with successful and non-traditional solutions to the compositional problem. In the *Martyrdom*, Stephen organizes the action by the unity of place and time; in the *Vita of Philaretos*, Niketas structures the story as a coherent development of three dialectical elements: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

On the other hand, in some cases the composition is only loosely and haphazardly arranged so that the episodes take place without chronological or logical sequence. We find this pattern in the *Parastaseis* and in the *Vita of Gregory of Dekapolis*. In the case of the latter this is surprising because the assumed author, Ignatios the Deacon, strictly follows the linear structure of compositional narrative in the two patriarchal *vitae* that are known to have been penned by him.

Even hymnographers, in "historicized" kanons, tried to overcome the ritual monotony of standard formulas, and certainly there was no place for monotony in minor genres, such as epigram, *gnomai* and epistolography, which began to flourish in this period.

### E. Wording. A brief conclusion

The problem of the relation between the graphic image and the image presented in words occupied a substantial part of the scholarly and political polemic of the eighth and ninth

centuries, and has been well studied.<sup>58</sup> As J.-M. Sansterre stressed, the Iconodules of the ninth century, and principally the patriarch Nikephoros and Theodore of Stoudios, were convinced of the superiority of the image over "the text and the word". However, the relation between the word or phrase *as a unit* and the image described in these words did not attract the attention of either Iconoclasts or Iconodules, and, to the best of our knowledge, has not been investigated by modern scholars. How did the Byzantines understand the role of the word?

In the letter to his disciple Timothy, Theodore of Stoudios formulates a signal principle of his esthetics: "Discourses (λόγοι) are images (εἰκόνες) of the soul, and every [writer] brings forth the sayings (λόγια) from the treasury (lit. "superfluity") of his heart" (Fatouros, *Theod. Stud. epistulae* 2, ep. 315.3-5). Accordingly, the missives of the brave Timothy are courageous, cheerful, fervent (εὐπρόθυμα, a non-classical word?), God-loving, fond of saints. By this, Theodore means that the writing reflects the writer and reflects him through words. Wording was extremely important for the Byzantine author and reader/listener; in theory more important than composition and imagery. To discuss this problem fully, however, we shall have to wait for Photios, who tried to formulate the principles of the Byzantine concept of wording. Meanwhile we shall restrict ourselves to some incidental observations.

The authors of the Dark Century were extremely fond of repetitive kola (above all, the figure of anaphora). Andrew of Crete, the creator of the very iterative *Megas Kanon*, enjoyed anaphora in his sermons in prose as well. The *First homily on the Exaltation of the Cross* begins with the formula "We celebrate the feast of the cross" which is repeated four times (PG 97, 1047C-1020A) and is followed by four sentences introduced by the clause "The cross is exalted". After a short interval comes a new anaphora ushered in by the exclamation "And if not the cross", succeeded by a long passage in which every phrase (eleven in all!) begins with the word "cross". And so it goes on and on, almost to the very end, where we find an elaborate anaphora that opens with the statement "The sign of the cross", the term for "sign" being rendered variously as τύπος, σημεῖον, σχῆμα, the list being supplemented by the related δύναμις, "might". Certainly, the authors of the first half of the ninth century continued to use anaphora, but they tried to escape the redundancy of isokola so typical of Andrew and his contemporaries.

The nascent ninth century created a diversified generic system: various new genres (chronography, epistolography, epigram, semi-secular hagiography, and others) emerged, pushing the homily out of the literary limelight. The wording itself became more diversified. In the works of the Dark Century, a relatively simple "patristic" wording, with rare flashes of rhetorical figures, was predominant; in the literary fund of the ninth century

<sup>58</sup> See J.-M. SANSTERRE, La parole, le texte et l'image selon les auteurs byzantins des époques iconoclaste et posticonoclaste, *Tèsto e immagine nell'alto medioevo* 1, Spoleto 1994 [Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 40], 197-243; G. DAGRON, Mots, images, icônes, *Nouvelle revue de psycho-analyse* 44, 1991, 151-168.

we find a broader spectrum. On the one hand, there are texts such as the *Vita of Nikephoros* by Ignatios the Deacon, a work of florid ("high-level") style in which rhetorical figures obscure rather than clarify the relatively poor content. In the words of P. Speck, the homilies of the eighth century were written in a regular patristic *koine*, whereas in the ninth century we come across a "stylistic-rhetorical tendency toward the Atticistic prose of the second sophistic."<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, side by side with this rhetorical imitation of the second sophistic, the first half of the ninth century produced a linguistic breakthrough when Niketas of Amnia, Theophanes (but not George the Synkellos!) and the *Scriptor Incertus*, following in the steps of the anonymous author of the *Miracles of St. Artemios*, avoided high-level rhetoric and opened the way for vernacular words and forms. Their vocabulary and phrase structure is simple and they thread the beads of facts almost without rhetorical embellishment. The majority of works, however, regardless of genre, stand somewhere between the turgid, antiquated language of Ignatios and the more or less plain and straightforward manner of Theophanes.

Very tentatively we shall attempt to single out among the authors of the period a number of innovators and archaizers. Particularly innovative were Theophanes, Theodore of Stoudios, Stephen the Sabaite, Stephen the Deacon, Niketas of Amnia, Clement, and the anonymous author of the *Vita of Leo of Catania* (the biography of Leo's anti-hero Heliodoros). Among the greatest archaizers of this period were George the Synkellos and Ignatios the Deacon (in the two patriarchal *vitae*), the former deeply imbued with the biblical past, the latter searching for sophisticated models for his rhetorical vocabulary. The problem of archaism and innovation was not consciously addressed in the first half of the ninth century. These terms had not yet been invented nor could they be found in the heritage of classical rhetoric. But by the mid-ninth century, Photios was using this sort of terminology; he applied it to ancient writers and not his contemporaries in a pejorative sense and limited them to discussions of the structure of wording. Although we have used the words differently, we feel that the authority of Photios justifies our use of them for medieval literature.

There is evidently no clearly marked divide between the texts of the Dark Century and those of the period of the Monastic Revival. Nonetheless, some kind of distinction can be discerned. The literature of the Dark Century was highly metaphysical, heavenly-oriented, a penultimate escape from reality: the author, typically a saint, gazed at the world of Christ, the Virgin, angels and heroes of the Old and New Testament; his main moral concern was repentance, a spiritual katharsis, as a preparation for eternal life in the groves of Paradise. Earthly turmoil was either ignored or seen through the magic glass of prophetic obscurity, and the humble elements of daily existence penetrated this sublime cosmos only by sheer chance.

<sup>59</sup> P. SPECK, *Klassizismus im achten Jahrhundert?*, *REB* 44, 1985, 210.

The literature of the ninth century, predominantly monastic in its social roots, brought back some elements of "historicization" and "humanization"; some features of the real world re-entered. Chronography replaced the fantastical prophecies of a pseudo-Methodios, the everyday letter became a literary genre, sublime homiletics gave its place to a diversified hagiography, and minor genres appeared (or reappeared) devoted to the rules of human conduct. Fewer writers were granted sanctity, and the human heroes (often contemporary and sometimes even semi-secular) became more popular than the figures of Holy Writ. While the simple and ill-balanced antithesis of Good and Evil remained the most important element in the description of the characters, nonetheless the first signs of a more subtle approach to the complexity of human nature began to make their appearance. The action could sometimes be located in a real and concrete setting, and the comic or parodical discourse was able to make its appearance. The themes of sex and food attracted much attention even though the spiritual goals of the works were worlds apart from these hedonistic realities. The themes of political life (primarily Iconoclasm and the wars with the Arabs and Bulgarians) were allowed onto the stage, and —last but not least— compositional monotony began to fragment into smaller parcels which we venture to dub "episodic units" or even "novelettes", a process accompanied by a reduction in the part played by the iterativeness of *isokola*.

Can all this provide us with sufficient grounds to speak, as Speck does, of a Byzantine Renaissance in the early ninth century? And, more generally, what do we mean by the term "Renaissance"? This is a question to which we shall return in the second volume.

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